THE NEW
SUNDAY EXPRESS
BENGALURU • SUNDAY • MARCH 10, 2024 • ₹12.00 • PAGES 26 • LATE CITY EDITION

PM iaugurates Sela tunnel in Arunachal

The world's longest twin-lane Sela tunnel, at an elevation of 13,000 ft in Arunachal Pradesh, was dedicated to the nation by PM Narendra Modi on Saturday. The tunnel, constructed at a cost of Rs 825 crore by the Border Roads Organisation, is strategically crucial as it is close to the LAC, a BRO official said. The project comprises two tunnels, with the first being a single-tube tunnel of 1,003 metre in length and the second being 1,595-metre-long, with an escape tube for emergencies.

When our house was in bad condition, Your eyes swelled up for us...

सत्यमेव जयते
Government of India

→ **4+ crore poor**
have a pucca house

→ **More than 10,000**
Jan Aushadi Kendras where medicines are available at 50% to 90% discount

→ **Guarantee of free ration**
till 2029 to 80 crore beneficiaries

Every household now
ready to fight poverty

Mera Bharat, Mera Parivar

CDC 222010/13/0342/2324

SOUTHERN RAILWAY

(CONSTRUCTION ORGANISATION)
E-TENDER

TENDER NOTICE NO. 71-CECNMS-23-24-E-446937 DATED 26-02-2024
TENDER NOTICE NO. 72-CECNMS-23-24-E-442624 DATED 06-03-2024

For and on behalf of The President of India, The Chief Engineer, Construction, Southern Railway, Egmore, Chennai - 600008 invites e-tender for the following work(s) as per Notice Inviting Tender (NIT) in our portal **www.ireps.gov.in.** The tenderers/Contractors intending to apply for the tender needs to get enrolled in the portal **www.ireps.gov.in** and only online tenders will be accepted.

NAME OF THE WORK

Madurai Division - Construction of ROB at Km.608/200-300 in lieu of LC No.494 (Km.608/000-100) between SQD-RMD stations. (TWO PACKET SYSTEM)

Tiruchchirappalli - Thanjavur - Nagore: Gauge conversion with extension to Nagore - Karaikkal New BG line between Nagappattinam - Tiruturaipundi and Newline Peralam - Karaikkal. Earthwork in forming bank, Construction of Minor bridges and Limited use subway from Ch.12000 to 18000 (Reach-III) in between Peralam and Karaikkal (Balance work) (TWO PACKET SYSTEM)

Cash Value (₹)	Earnest Money Deposit (Rupee)	Period of Completion (Months)	Closing Date @ 15.30 Hrs
208254353.92	1191300.00	18	19-04-2024
368197484.12	1991000.00	4	28-03-2024

For further details, please refer to web site portal www.ireps.gov.in or contact Office of the Chief Administrative Officer, Construction, E.V.R. High Road, Egmore, Chennai - 600 008.

Chief Engineer (Construction),
Egmore, Chennai - 600 008.
for and On behalf of President of India

Follow us on: twitter.com/GMSRailway

BIHAR SCHOOL EXAMINATION BOARD

SHORT NOTICE INVITING e-TENDER
(Through e-procurement mode only over https://eproc2.bihar.gov.in)
Re-Tender Notice No.- PR 103/2024

Bihar School Examination Board, Patna invites e-tenders under two bid systems from the reputed Suppliers/ experienced Firms /Companies/ Agencies/ Societies for **"Providing Operational & Maintenance Support with Cloud Hosting for Online Facilitation System for Students (OFSS) of Bihar School Examination Board."**

Scope of work	Cost of Tender Document (Inclusive of All Taxes)	Tender Processing Fee (Inclusive of All Taxes)	Earnest Money
Providing Operational & Maintenance Support with Cloud Hosting for Online Facilitation System for Students (OFSS) of Bihar School Examination Board.	₹5,900/- (Rupees Five Thousand Nine Hundred only)	₹3,540/- (Three Thousand Five Hundred Forty Rupees Only)	₹2,00,000/- (Rupees Two Lakh only)

Tender Schedule/ Programme:

Particulars	Date/Time: Duration
Online Sale/Download date of Tender documents	**From: 10/03/2024 (11:00 Hrs.) to 23/03/2024 (13:00 Hrs.) (https://eproc2.bihar.gov.in)**
Pre-Bid Meeting	**13/03/2024 at 11:30 Hrs.** (Bihar School Examination Board, Sinha Library Road, Patna-800017)
Last Date/ Time for submission/ of Bid	**23/03/2024 up to 13:00 Hrs. (https://eproc2.bihar.gov.in)**
Submission of EMD (in case of BG) in Hard copy/ Original	**23/03/2024 up to 14:00 Hrs.** (Bihar School Examination Board, Sinha Library Road, Patna-800017)
General Bid Opening Date & Time	**23/03/2024 at 14:30 Hrs (https://eproc2.bihar.gov.in)** (Bihar School Examination Board, Sinha Library Road, Patna-800017)
Financial Bid Opening Date and Time	Date to be announced later by competent authority.

- Corrigendum/Addendum, if any, will be published on e-Procurement Portal, Bihar https://eproc2.bihar.gov.in itself.
- Contact Details: Sh. Vinod Kumar Singh, Nodal officer - +91 62999 23095, E-Mail ID – eproc-bseb-bih@gov.in/ eproc.bseb@gmail.com
- Note: - Bihar School Examination Board reserves the right to Accept/ Cancel/ Reschedule tenders without assigning any reasons.

Secretary

PUBLIC NOTICE

FOR PURCHASE OF PROPERTY

NOTICE is hereby given that **Mr. B. Vivekananda Reddy** is willing to sell the schedule property in favour of my Client **Mr. Prabhakar. R. K** free from all encumbrances. Any person having any right, title, interest, claim or demand of any nature whatsoever in respect of the said property, is hereby required to make the same known in writing along with the documentary proof thereof, to the below mentioned his Counsel Mr.RADESH.K, Office at Third Floor, Above Favara Car World, SMN Complex, Whitefield Main Road, Thubarahalli, Bangalore. within 07 days from the date of publication hereof, failing which the negotiations shall be completed, without any reference to such claims and the claims if any, shall be deemed to have been given up or waived.

SCHEDULE

All that piece and parcel of the Residential Property bearing Site No: 41/5, BBMP Form-B, Sl No: 540, Property No: 41/5, measuring East to West: 33 Feet and North to South: (61+62)/2 Feet, totally measuring 2029.5 Square Feet, formed in Sy No: 41/5, Situated at Singayyanapalya Village, Dyavasandra Dakle, Krishnarajapuram Hobli, Bangalore East Taluk.

Contact : **Mr. RADESH BE,** LL.B, LL.M
Director - MKM Legal Solutions Pvt Ltd.
e-mail id:
radesh@mkmlegalsolutions.com
Contact No: +91 9448070651

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given to the public, that My client **Mr. Amaresh .K.M** S/o. Muniswamy Reddy R/a No.264, Near Muniswamy Temple, V Kallahally, Valagerekallahalli, Sarjapura, Bangalore-562125, is the absolute owner of the property bearing Sy.No.39/6 measuring 17.08 guntas situated at Valegere Kallahalli Village, Sarjapur Hobli, Anekal Taluk, Bangalore Urban District, further state that, recently he has noticed following document: **1)** Sale Deed dated 27.12.2019, executed by Mr.Amaresh.K.M., Smt.Pushpa and Kumari Monika Reddy @ Monika A Reddy in favour of Sri. Lakshminarayan .H.K registered as Document No.SRJ-1-05127/2019-20, in Book 1, Stored in CD.No.SRJD526 in the Office of the Sub-Registrar, Sarjapur, **2)** Confirmation Deed dated 21.08.2021 executed by Smt.Shobha, Master.Chandan.S and Master Nandan.S in favour of Sri. Lakshminarayan .H.K registered as Document No.SRJ-1-02447/2021-22, in Book 1, Stored in CD.No.SRJD918 in the Office of the Sub-Registrar, Sarjapura have been Miss-Placed or lost the original document while traveling from Home to Office and a police complaint has been lodged to that effect.

It is requested to the general public that if anybody comes across with the said original document, the same may be returned to the undersigned **within 7 days** from the date of this publication and also the General Public is hereby informed that anybody dealing with the said property based on the lost/ Misplaced document in any manner whatsoever, will be doing so, at their own cost, risk and liabilities and my client will not be held responsible in any Manner for any such transactions.

SHRUTHI.R.J, Advocate
Office at No.219A/11, Ground Floor, 54th Cross, 4th Block, Rajajinagar, Bangalore - 560010.
Mobile No. 9620988784.

THE KARUR VYSYA BANK LTD

Karur Vysya Bank — Smart way to bank

ASSET RECOVERY BRANCH
Divisional Office Building, No.6, Shri Vasavi Temple Road, Near Sajjan Rao Circle, V V Puram, Bangalore - 560004,

SALE NOTICE FOR SALE OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES

E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8(6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower (s) and Guarantor (s) that the below described immovable property mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor, The Karur Vysya Bank Ltd, the constructive/physical (whichever is applicable) possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of **The Karur Vysya Bank Ltd.,** Secured Creditor, will be sold on **"As is where is", "As is what is", and "Whatever there is"** on **25.03.2024,** for recovery of **Rs. 1,37,02,439.72/- (Rupees One Crore Thirty Seven Lakhs Two Thousand Four Hundred Thirty Nine and Paisa Seventy Two only)** due to "The Karur Vysya Bank Ltd", Secured Creditor from **(1) M/s. Esskays Clothing,** New No.4, Old No.1500, Roopa Avenue, Situated At South End, Jayanagar 9th Block, Near Ragigudda, B Road, Bangalore-560069, **(2) Mr. S. Swaminathan,** S/o. Mr. Subramanian, No. 178, Block No. 18, 24th Main, 9th Cross, R V Dental College, J P Nagar 1st Phase, Jeevan Mithra, Bangalore- 560078 and **(3) Mrs. Shruthi Swaminathan (Guarantor),** W/o. Mr. S. Swaminathan, No. 178, Block No. 18, 24th Main, 9th Cross R V Dental College, J P Nagar, 1st Phase Jeevan Mithra, Bangalore-560078. The reserve price will be **Rs. 34,00,000/-(Rupees Thirty Four Lakhs only) and the earnest money deposit will be Rs. 3,40,000/- (Rupees Three Lakhs and Fourty Thousand only).**

DESCRIPTION OF THE IMMOVABLE PROPERTY

All that piece and parcel of Residential building bearing Flat No.C6, 2nd Floor, Block No.C, Door No.77, of the building known as Ananthi Flats with a super built up area of 650 Sqft and 406 Sqft of undivided share in the property situated at R.S No.298/5C, Village No.111, Pillayar Koil Street, Jafferkhanpet, Kodampakkam, Chennai District bounded by : North by: Property belonging to Shanmuga Mudaliyar, South by: Pillayar koil Street Road, East by: Property belonging to Shanmuga Mudaliyar, West by: Property belonging to Mnicka Naicker,

For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer to the link provided in our Bank's/ Secured Creditor's website i.e **www.kvb.co.in/Property** Under Auction also at the web portal **BankAuctions.in/ForeclosureIndia.com** of the service provider, **M/s. 4 closure.**

Statutory 15 Days' Notice under Rule 9(1) of the SARFAESI Act, 2002

The borrower/s and guarantor/s are hereby notified to pay the dues as mentioned above along with up to date interest and ancillary expenses before the date of e-Auction, failing which the Schedule property will be auctioned/sold and balance dues, if any, will be recovered with interest and cost.

Date : 08.03.2024
Place: Bangalore

Sd/- Authorized Officer
THE KARUR VYSYA BANK LIMITED

TAMIL NADU CIVIL SUPPLIES CORPORATION (TNCSC)

(Government of Tamil Nadu)
No. 12, Thambusamy Road, Kilpauk, Chennai – 600 010
E-TENDER NOTICE
E-Tender Reference No:ME5/010781/2022, dated:09.03.2024

TNCSC a Government of Tamil Nadu organization invites e-tenders under "Two Cover System" from Private Players for Selection of Private Operator for the Operation and Maintenance of 50000 MTs capacity Scientific Silo facility at Erukkur MRM Campus, Mayiladuthurai District for a period of 10 years on Public Private Partnership (PPP) mode.

The Tender documents can be downloaded at www.tntenders.gov.in from 12.03.2024. The details of the tender is as follows:

1	Pre-bid meeting	08.04.2024 at 3.00 PM
2	Due Date & Time of submission of the tender	08.05.2024 up to 11.00 AM
3	Date & Time of opening of the tender	09.05.2024 up to 11.30 AM
4	Earnest Money Deposit	Rs.20,00,000/- (Rupees Twenty lakh only). The procedure for remittance of EMD is given in the Tender Document.

DIPR/1514/TEN/2024

MANAGING DIRECTOR

Bank of Baroda

बैंक ऑफ़ बड़ौदा
Bank of Baroda

(A Government of India Undertaking)
Maninagar (West) Branch
Maninagar Cross Roads, Maninagar, Ahmedabad-380008.
Phone: (079)-25451924, 25462740, 25463750, E-Mail : dbmanw@bankofbaroda.com

POSSESSION NOTICE (For Immovable Property) (See- Rule 8(1))

Whereas, the undersigned being the Authorized Officer of **Bank of Baroda, Maninagar (West) Branch,** under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest (Second) Act, 2002 and in exercise of the powers conferred under Section 13(2) read with **Rule-3** of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued Demand Notice dated **16.12.2023** and Paper Publication for the same on **03.01.2024** by Financial Express in English & Divya Bhasker in local language gujarati at ahmedabad and Indian express in English and Kannada Prabha in local language kannada at Bengaluru and calling upon the **Borrower M/s. Unique Interatrade Private Limited and Personal Guarantors and Mortgagors 1. Reena Pankaj Surana, 2.Pankaj J Bothra, 3. Pankaj Surana, 4. Anil C Bothra, 5. Urmila Bothra, 6. Meera Jain** to repay the amount mentioned in the notice being **Rs. 4,04,23,123.84** (Rupees Four Crore Four lakhs Twenty Three Thousand One Hundred TwentyThree and Paisa Eighty Four Only) within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

The Borrower having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under Section (4) of Section 13 of the Said Act read with rule 8 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 on this the **7th day of March of the year 2024.**

The borrower/Guarantor/Mortgagor in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of the **Bank of Baroda** for an amount of **Rs. 4,04,23,123.84** (Rupees Four Crore Four lakhs Twenty Three Thousand One Hundred TwentyThree and Paisa Eighty Four Only) plus interest thereon along with cost, charges and expenses till date of payment.

The borrower's attention is invited to sub-section (8) of Section 13 in respect of time available to redeem the secured assets.

Description of the immovable Properties: (1) Equitable Mortgage of Flat No. D/3, 4TH Floor, Vijay Tower, Near Kankaria Lake Besides Hill Park Society, Kankaria Road, Mani Nagar, Ahmedabad, Area of Flat 142.14 Sq Mtrs and Carpet Area 87.53 sq meter Approx. Stands record in the name of Ms Meera Jumarmal Bothra, Boundries: East: Building margin and Road, West: Flat No. D/4, North: Building Margin, South: Passage and Flat No. D/02.

(2) Equitable Mortgage of Flat No. D/4,4th Floor, Vijay Tower, Near Kankaria Lake, Besides Hill Park Society, Kankaria Road, Mani Nagar, Ahmedabad, Area of Flat 142.14 Sq Mtrs and Carpet Area 87.53 sq meter Approx. Stands record in the name of Ms Urmila Chandalmal Bothra. Boundries: East :Flat No. D 3, West: Building Margin, North : Building Margin, South: Passage and Flat No. D/01.

(3) Equitable Mortgage of Flat No. 2, Ground Floor, GM Elegancy Apartment, Property Bearing Site No. 34,35 and 36, CMC Katha No. 5562, 5563 and 5564, situated at Halagevaderahalli village, 3rd Main Road, off Kenchenahalli Road, Near State Bank of India, BEML Layout, RR Nagar Branch, Kengeri Hobli, Bangalore South Taluk, Bangalore-560098. in the Name of Ms. Reena Pankaj Surana The boundaries are : East: Deccan Arcade Apartment/private property, West: Public Road, North: Public Road, South: private property No. 37.

Date : 07.03.2024
Place : Ahmedabad

Sd/- Authorised Officer
Bank of Baroda

All the news. In just a click.
Log to www.newindianexpress.com
THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS
/thenewindianxpress
@newindianxpress
+The New Indian Express
Google Play App Store

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform to the General Public that my client, Sri. D. Chandre Gowda, S/o. Late Dasappa, has entered into an agreement of sale to purchase a Site No.34, from Shri. Kiran B.O., S/o. Shri. Oblesh B.N., and Shri. G.V. Srinivasa Varma, S/o. Late V. Nagaiah, which is more fully described in the Scheduled below. If any person/s having any claims, charges, objections, attachments, right, title and interest whatsoever over the Schedule Property or portion thereof in any manner whatsoever, may forward their objection/s if any, fully supported by documentary proof/s to the undersigned within 7 (Seven) days from the date of publication of this Notice, failing which, my client will deem that the Schedule Property is free from all encumbrances and proceed for completion of the sale transactions by getting the sale deed registered in his favor and thereafter no claims will be considered.

SCHEDULE

All that piece and parcel of the residentially converted immovable property bearing Vacant Site No.34, Property I.D No.2727434949, Katha No.2301/34, Measuring East to West 9.14 meters and North to South 12.19 meters, admeasure 111.48 square meters, in the Layout known as 'SVARNA SAMRUDDHI PARADISE' formed in the residentially converted lands totally measuring 5 acres 05 guntas, comprised in Sy.No.8/1 measuring 0.30 guntas, Sy.No.8/3 measuring 0.15 guntas, Sy.No.8/2 measuring 2 acres and Sy.No.9/3 measuring 1-00 acre and Sy.No.9/4 measuring 1 acre, situated at Thammashettihalli Village, Kasaba Hobli, Doddaballapura Tq, and bounded on the East by : Site No.35, West by : Road North by : Site No.33, and South by : Road.

M. Nagaraja, Advocate,
#25, 80 ft. Double Road, near Shanmukha Swamy Temple, BEML V Stage, R. R. Nagar, Bangalore-98. Mob: 9844512959

IN THE COURT OF THE PRINCIPAL CITY CIVIL AND SESSIONS JUDGE AT BENGALURU
MISC. NO.1154/2023

BETWEEN: 1. CMR Jnanadhara Trust, A registered charitable trust, having its registered office at #2079, 27| Main, 3TM Block, 3' Stage. HBR Layout, Bengaluru-560 084. Represented by its President, Dr. Sabitha Ramamurthy **Petitioner no.1**
2. K.R. Lakshmish Aged about 68 years Residing at #602, SiriOramur Adonis 121/4, 3rd Stage Mysore-570023 **... Petitioner No. 02**
3. Sri K.C. Jagannath Reddy S/o Shri. Chillamuniappa Reddy Kacharakanahalli Residing at No.2, 13th Cross, Near Channakeshava Temple, Kacharakanahalli St.Thomas Town Post Bangalore-560084 **... Petitioner No.03**
AND: NIL ...Respondents

WHEREAS the Petitioner above named have filed the Petition under Section 34 of the Indian Trust Act, 1882 read with Section 92 of the Civil Procedure Code, 1908 for the sale of Schedule Property, an immovable property totally measuring an extent of 75,212 sqft comprised in portion of Sy. No. 60 of Doddakallasandra Village, Uttarahalli Hobli, Bangalore South Taluk now bearing BBMP Khata No. 301/271/60/1, totally measuring an extent of about 75,212 Sq ft. along with a building constructed thereon totally measuring a built up area of 18,528.85 sq. ft and to receive the income from the sale to the Trust Account.

Interested parties are hereby called to appear before this Honble Court in person or by a pleader duly instructed on 19/4/24 at 11am to show cause against Petitioner, failing wherein the matter will be heard and determined Ex-parte.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY

All that piece and parcel of the immovable property comprised in a portion of Sy. No. 60 of Doddakallasandra Village, Uttarahalli Hobli, Bangalore South Taluk, now bearing BBMP Khata No.301/271/60/1, totally measuring an extent of about 75,212 Sq. ft along with the building constructed thereon totally measuring built up area of about 18,528.85 sq. ft and bounded on the: East by: Common Access Road West by: Gubbala Road followed by layout named Singapore Garden comprised in Sy. No. 59 of Doddakallasandra Village. North by: Property presently belonging to Sri. Subash Chandra Goyal comprised in a portion of Sy. No.60 of Doddakallasandra Village followed by common access road. South by: Bangalore Kanakapura Main Road.

Given under my hand and seal of the Court 2nd day of March 2024.

By order of the Court
ASSISTANT REGISTRAR
CITY CIVIL COURT, BANGALORE

Address for Service: **Murali and Co.** Advocates No.102, Haudin House, Haudin Road, Bengaluru -560042

SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY G2G

Tender Notice No. 09-CWS-MYSS-2023-24
Dated: 04.03.2024

The undersigned, on behalf of the President of India, invites E-tenders for the following work.

Name of Work	Appx. Cost
Maintenance of Bio toilet tanks at Central Workshop, SWR, Mysuru for a period of 02 years.	Rs. 58,16,184/-

Last date for submission of bids:
Up to 17:00 hrs. of 25.03.2024
For details log on: www.ireps.gov.in

Deputy Chief Workshop Manager
Mysuru South

PUB/737/AAV/PRB/SWR/2023-24

South Western Railway-SWR SWRRLY SWRRLY

PUBLIC NOTICE

Public are hereby informed that, **M/s. SSVR Builders,** represented by its Managing Partner N.Rajyalakshmi has lost the Original **1)** Sale Deed dated 03.06.1996, executed by Lakshmamma, wife of late Yellappa in favour of Y.Munikrishnappa, registered as document No.2766/1996-97 in Book I, in the Office of the Sub-Registrar, Bangalore South Taluk, Bangalore in respect of the property bearing Sy.No.6 measuring 16 gutnas and **2)** Sale Deed dated 03.06.1996, executed by Lakshmamma, wife of late Yellappa in favour of Muthappa, registered as document No.2764/1996-97 in Book I, in the Office of the Sub-Registrar, Bangalore South Taluk, Bangalore in respect of the property bearing Sy.No.6 measuring 16 guntas, both properties in Sorahunase Village Varthur Hobli, Bangalore East Taluk, Bangalore. A police complaint dated 07.03.2024 is lodged in this regard. If any person finds the same may kindly be delivered to the undersigned or to my client. Any person un-authorisly holding the same and dealing with the same in the respect of the above property in any manner, the same will not be binding on my clients. In this behalf if any person having any Objections or claims can lodge the same with the undersigned along with supporting documentary evidence within Seven days of this Notice. Later on the same will not be entertained and my client proceed to deal with said property as their like.

H.D.BASAPPA, Advocate
"G.R.COMPLEX", # 31, 1st Floor, Service Road, Domlur Layout, Bangalore-560 071
Mobile : 9986349626
E-Mail : basappahd2018@gmail.com
Dated: 09-03-2024

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform the general public that our clients **Mr. Ravikiran M.N** S/o. Nagendra M.V and Mrs.Poojitha D/o. Nagavenkatesh.B are intending to purchase the schedule property from Mrs.Prabhavathi.M W/o Mr.Mohan, residing at No.48/14, Situated at 8th C Cross Road, 3rd Main Road, Venkatapura village, Koramangala, Bangalore-560034, claiming to be the owner of the schedule property agreed to sell the same in favour of our Clients.

Therefore any person/s, Financial institutions, co-partner/s of the owners, LRs., or any other person having any claim, any objection, interest, dispute/litigation for the above intended sale transaction or opposing the sale of the Schedule property to our clients in any manner whatsoever, shall submit their written objections, he/she/they may contact the undersigned with the documentary evidence substantiate his/her/their objections/claims/details of dispute/s thereof along with the supporting documents with in 7days from the date of publication hereof, deteriorating which such claimis or objections, if any, shall be considered as waived and /or discharged forever, and Any objections received subsequently shall not considered and our clients will proceed to purchase the schedule property.

SHEDULE PROPERTY

All that piece and parcel of the Property bearing No.29, Khatha No.242/9, presently BBMP Site No.63/29, Municipal No.242/9-29/63, PID No.56-107-242/9-29/63, New PID No.165-W0102-19, Situated at Kathriguppe Gramatana, Yeliappa Garden, Uttarahalli Hobli, Bangalore South Taluk, Bangalore, BBMP Ganesha Mandira Ward No.56, Presently comes under the jurisdiction of Bruhat Bangalore Mahanagara Palike, Measuring East to West : 30 feet and North to South : 40 feet, in all measuring 1200 square feet with constructed building and bounded as follows:- **East by** : Site No.64 belonging to Mohan S/o Nagaraj,
West by : Site No.62 belonging to Mohan Kumar S/o Maniraju **North by** : 30 feet Road ,
South by : Site No.70 belonging to Ashoka

S.A. Law Associates, Advocate
No.29/1, Old No.54, G.floor, Nanjappa Road, K.H.Road Cross, Shanthinagar, Bangalore-560027
Bangalore Date:09.03.2024

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform the general public that our clients **Mr. Ravikiran M.N** S/o. Nagendra M.V and Mrs.Poojitha D/o. Nagavenkatesh.B are intending to purchase the schedule property from Mrs.Prabhavathi.M W/o Mr.Mohan, residing at No.48/14, Situated at 8th C Cross Road, 3rd Main Road, Venkatapura village, Koramangala, Bangalore-560034, claiming to be the owner of the schedule property agreed to sell the same in favour of our Clients.

Therefore any person/s, Financial institutions, co-partner/s of the owners, LRs., or any other person having any claim, any objection, interest, dispute/litigation for the above intended sale transaction or opposing the sale of the Schedule property to our clients in any manner whatsoever, shall submit their written objections, he/she/they may contact the undersigned with the documentary evidence substantiate his/her/their objections/claims/details of dispute/s thereof along with the supporting documents with in 7days from the date of publication hereof, deteriorating which such claimis or objections, if any, shall be considered as waived and /or discharged forever, and Any objections received subsequently shall not considered and our clients will proceed to purchase the schedule property.

SHEDULE PROPERTY

All that piece and parcel of the Property bearing No.29, Khatha No.242/9, presently BBMP Site No.63/29, Municipal No.242/9-29/63, PID No.56-107-242/9-29/63, New PID No.165-W0102-19, Situated at Kathriguppe Gramatana, Yeliappa Garden, Uttarahalli Hobli, Bangalore South Taluk, Bangalore, BBMP Ganesha Mandira Ward No.56, Presently comes under the jurisdiction of Bruhat Bangalore Mahanagara Palike, Measuring East to West : 30 feet and North to South : 40 feet, in all measuring 1200 square feet with constructed building and bounded as follows:- **East by** : Site No.64 belonging to Mohan S/o Nagaraj,
West by : Site No.62 belonging to Mohan Kumar S/o Maniraju **North by** : 30 feet Road ,
South by : Site No.70 belonging to Ashoka

S.A. Law Associates, Advocate
No.29/1, Old No.54, G.floor, Nanjappa Road, K.H.Road Cross, Shanthinagar, Bangalore-560027
Bangalore Date:09.03.2024

THE NEW
SUNDAY EXPRESS

BENGALURU • SUNDAY • MARCH 10, 2024 • ₹12.00 • PAGES 26 • LATE CITY EDITION

CHENNAI ▪ MADURAI ▪ VIJAYAWADA ▪ BENGALURU ▪ KOCHI ▪ HYDERABAD ▪ VISAKHAPATNAM ▪ COIMBATORE ▪ KOZHIKODE ▪ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM ▪ BELAGAVI ▪ BHUBANESWAR ▪ SHIVAMOGGA ▪ MANGALURU ▪ TIRUPATI ▪ TIRUCHY ▪ TIRUNELVELI ▪ SAMBALPUR ▪ HUBBALLI ▪ DHARMAPURI ▪ KOTTAYAM ▪ KANNUR ▪ VILLUPURAM ▪ KOLLAM ▪ TADEPALLIGUDEM ▪ NAGAPATTINAM ▪ THRISSUR ▪ KALABURAGI

ASIF ALI ZARDARI BECOMES PAKISTAN'S 14TH PRESIDENT

Asif Ali Zardari was overwhelmingly elected as the 14th President of Pakistan on Saturday, becoming the only civilian president of the coup-prone country for a second time. Zardari, the co-chairperson of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), was the joint candidate of the ruling alliance of the PPP and the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N). **P11**

Hot on heels of blast suspect, NIA in K'buragi

Agency trying to trace two men who interacted with prime suspect in Ballari

RAMAKRISHNA BADSESHI & PRAVEEN KUMAR
@ Kalaburagi, Bengaluru

A new image of the alleged bomber, released by the NIA, on Saturday

THE National Investigation Agency (NIA) is tightening the net around the so-far unidentified prime suspect in the March 1 afternoon blast at Rameswaram Cafe's Kundalahalli branch in Brookefield, Bengaluru. The probe has taken a 10-member NIA team to Kalaburagi where other two unidentified persons who were seen interacting with the blast suspect outside Ballari bus stand may have taken a particular bus to.

The NIA is particularly focusing on Kalyana Karnataka Road Transport Corporation (KKRTC) bus number KA 32 F 1885 of Kalaburagi Depot No 1. Sources said the NIA investigators got information that there were two unreserved seats on that bus, the occupants of which took the bus to Kalaburagi from Ballari, one getting off at Ram Mandir Circle and another got down in the Central Bus Stand in Kalaburagi late March 1 night.

Sources said the NIA team has reason to believe that the two persons who spoke with the prime suspect outside the Ballari bus stand are the ones who occupied the two unreserved seats on that bus to reach Kalaburagi. Another NIA team has collected CCTV footage from Kalaburagi Railway Station and verified the footage for more than two hours in the office of Inspector of Railway Protection Force situated near railway station on Saturday.

A senior KKRTC official, on the condition of anonymity, told *TNSE* that the NIA personnel have also collected the last eights days' CCTV footage from Humnabad bus stand apart from those at Ballari and Kalaburagi, all three falling under the KKRTC jurisdiction. Apart from the CCTV footage, NIA has also collected details from ticket booking counters from Bengaluru to Kalaburagi as well as from Bellary to Kalaburagi and Humnabad, the official said. **P7**

'Drug lord' Sadiq held, lens on bigwigs

MUKESH RANJAN @ New Delhi

THE Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) on Saturday said it has arrested Jaffer Sadiq, a former DMK functionary, in connection with an international drug trafficking investigation estimated to be worth more than ₹2,000 crore. The agency had busted the cartel last month.

NCB deputy director general (operations) Gyaneshwar Singh told reporters in New Delhi that Sadiq's link with the Tamil and Hindi film industry and some 'high-profile' people, and some instances of 'political funding' are under the scanner of the agency. Sources said the anti-drug agency may summon a 'high-profile' DMK leader for questioning over suspected monetary transactions between him and Sadiq.

Sadiq was arrested in Delhi on the basis of specific intelligence inputs and he is the "mastermind and kingpin" of a transnational pseudoephedrine smuggling racket spread across Australia, New Zealand and Malaysia from India, Singh said.

Sadiq, a Tamil film producer, was recently expelled by the ruling DMK from the party after his name and purported links to the drugs network were brought to light by the agency. He was the Chennai west deputy organiser of the DMK's NRI wing. Sadiq, whose full name is Jaffar Sadiq Abdul Rehman, went into hiding after the agency conducted raids in Delhi in the case in February and he travelled from Chennai to Thiruvananthapuram, Mumbai, Pune, Ahmedabad and Jaipur before being taken into custody following his brief questioning by the NCB, Singh said.

EC Arun Goel resigns weeks before polls

RAJESH KUMAR THAKUR @ New Delhi

ELECTION Commissioner **Arun Goel** on Saturday resigned from his post much ahead of completion of his tenure. President Droupadi Murmu accepted it, paving the way for appointment of two new election commissioners.

Goel's resignation came a week before the likely announcement of dates for the Lok Sabha polls. A 1985-batch IAS officer, Goel's tenure in the commission was till December 5, 2027. He would have gone on to become the Chief Election Commissioner after Rajiv Kumar retired next February.

The reasons for his stepping down were not known immediately. With his resignation, the three-member Election Commission has only one member.

Goel's appointment as Election Commissioner was challenged in the Supreme Court. Later, the petition was dismissed by a two-judge bench last year. The government is likely to appoint two new ECs by Monday for smooth preparatory of the general election. A committee headed by the law minister and two Union secretaries will shortlist five names. Then a selection committee headed by the PM and comprising a Union minister and Lok Sabha Opposition Leader will finalise the names and send their picks to the President.

BJP-TDP ALLY
SEAT SHARING DEAL FINALISED FOR POLLS

The alliance is for upcoming Lok Sabha and AP Assembly elections, with former chief minister of the state, N Chandrababu Naidu, asserting that the combine will sweep the polls. **P7**

EXPRESS READ

CCS approves ₹15k-cr AMCA project
Bengaluru: The Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS), headed by the PM, approved a Rs 15,000-crore fifth-generation Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft (AMCA) project. **P7**

'BWSSB has enough water for city till July'
Bengaluru: Urging citizens not to panic, BWSSB Chairman Ramprasath Manohar on Saturday said that the board has adequate water for supply in the city and its outskirts till July. **P4**

Shoot those raising pro-Pak slogans: Min
Bengaluru: Minister KN Rajanna on Saturday said those raising pro-Pakistan slogans should be shot dead. He suggested that Karnataka should have the UP model of law and order. **P6**

Team India celebrate with the winners' trophy after bulldozing 'BazBall' England in Dharamsala on Saturday | PTI | **P13**

India's series of blows to Eng

Gomesh S @ Dharamsala: When debutants Dhruv Jurel and Sarfaraz Khan held aloft the Anthony de Mello trophy with the mighty Dhauladhar Range in the backdrop, the gesture seemed more than just symbolic. The future of Indian cricket is in the hands of the youngsters. One may get lost in the beauty of this serene and picturesque venue, but the importance of this series will not be lost. Especially, the way India came back after losing the first Test in Hyderabad and the way young cricketers complemented the seniors throughout the series. All the buzz around BazBall too died down in the next four Test matches as India toyed with the visiting team's batting to make it 4-1 here with an emphatic innings victory. Meanwhile, **James Anderson, 41, became the first seam bowler to claim 700 Test wickets.**

Shri Siddaramaiah
Hon'ble Chief Minister
Govt. of Karnataka

GOVERNMENT OF KARNATAKA
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Shri D. K. Shivakumar
Hon'ble Deputy Chief Minister
Govt. of Karnataka

Agriculture Department schemes and progress - Bird's eye view

Newly announced schemes for the year 2024-2025

- Karnataka Raitha Samrudhi Yojane
- Agriculture Development Authority under the chairmanship of Chief Minister
- Establishment of Community Seed Bank

Visit to Millet field by Hon'ble Chief Minister of Karnataka along with Agriculture Minister Shri N. Chaluvarayaswamy.

- "Namma Millet" Programme for value addition and marketing of millets
- Development of R.K Shaala as Knowledge Center in PPP mode
- Expansion of e-SAP technology to the entire State

Current Year Progress

Tractor: 126
Power Tiller: 3244
34,429 Total benefitted farmers
Rs.264.92 Crore Subsidy

- Quality seeds distribution: 6.12 lakh quintals,13.09 lakh farmers and Rs.155.36 Crore subsidy.
- Farm Mechanization: 64,059 farm machineries and Rs.414.97 Crore subsidy.
- Micro Irrigation: 2.34 lakh farmers and Rs.502 Crore subsidy.
- Crop Insurance : Payment settled to 8 lakh farmers to the tune of 600 Crore, Balance claim settlement under process.
- Krishi Bhagya : Construction of more than 10,000 farm ponds.
- Hi-tech Harvester Hub: Rs.50 Crore for establishment of 100 Hi-tech harvester hubs.
- Redgram Wilt disease (Nete Roga): Rs.223 Crore compensation to the 2.98 lakh farmers of Bidar, Kalaburagi, Vijayapura and Yadagiri Districts.
- International Millets and Organic Trade Fair-2024: More than 2 lakh visitors, 41 MoUs and 150 Crore business.
- Agri Startup: Rs.10 Crore for establishment of 48 Agri Startups
- Raita Siri: Rs.8.56 Crore incentive to more than 8500 farmers for millet cultivation.
- Training: Training on agriculture technologies to more than 1 lakh farmers.
- Approval to fill up the 750 Technical posts to work at the field level.
- Establishment of "Raita Kare Kendra" (Integrated Call Center) .
- Adoption of QR code in input distribution.

Tractor: 510
Power Tiller:2712
Beneficiaries to be covered-29,630
Rs.177.05 Crore Subsidy

Serving farmer is Serving God- Visit Agriculture Department and get the available benefits.

Dr. Puthra G.T, Director of Agriculture | Y.S. Patil, I.A.S., Commissioner for Agriculture | V. Anbukkumar, I.A.S., Secretary to Govt., Agriculture Department

For further information you may please contact "Raita Kare Kendra-1800-425-3553"

KARNATAKA STATE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, Sheshadri Road, Bengaluru-560001

'WE SHOULD GET EQUAL OPPORTUNITY BECAUSE WE DESERVE IT'

EXPRESS Dialogues

NS Rama is among the first few women engineers of Karnataka in the early 1970s. Although studying engineering was not considered a woman's domain then, she broke many stereotypes and continued to do so when she started working. After completing five years of Electrical Engineering (BE was five years then) with a gold medal, she joined Indian Telephone Industries (ITI). She has strong research and development experience in telecommunication and worked on projects ranging from telephones to satellite communications. Rama played a major role in bringing in state-of-the-art digital microwave technology into India during the 1980s. Travelling to various parts of India and also to different countries, Rama, while in her 40s, quit her job and joined Infosys when the IT boom was just about starting. From hardware in the telecom sector to software, Rama managed to excel. Post retirement in 2009, Rama took on a new role as Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Electronics City Industries Association (ELCIA) and then played a vital role as CEO in building better infrastructure for Electronic city and the formation of Electronics City Industrial Township Authority (ELCITA), which is the only industrial township in India. Rama speaks about her journey. Excerpts:

Please tell us about your journey. You have opened the gates and shown the way for many women engineers and professionals now.
I passed out of PUC in 1965 with 100% in maths, and on the suggestion of my teacher I took up engineering. During the interview, the panel questioned why I wanted to take it up. They also asked me if I would be able to handle men on the production floor as there were too many men in this profession. I simply said, 'Why not, what's the problem?' He also asked me if I played cricket. Till date, I do not know the relevance of that question.

How was it in the engineering college back then?
The professors and lecturers in Mysuru were very supportive. At that time there was no ladies' toilet also and later they made it for us. They also allotted a ladies' room for us. There were only one or two girls in engineering back then. The boys and girls were not talking to each other. But we girls were taking the course very seriously. I used to take surveys, projects in the foundry very seriously and enjoyed it. I always wanted to do my best and ensure I learn from every interaction.

What do you want to tell those who say women should be given privileges because of their gender?
When we talk of equality, we should be treated based on merit. We have to deserve the position and it's not just because I am a woman that I should get any special privileges. I should get it because I deserve it. This approach will give you more confidence and it will empower you. Even those days, few who graduated but did not take up any job. I feel that in those days the number of engineering colleges were very few and there were hardly any seats. You (women) have deprived a boy who could have become an engineer, so we should be sensitive about it. Once you have taken up a profession, you should be serious about it. There will be exigencies. But now things have changed. Girls are there in all fields, not just in engineering. I am happy that women are contributing to the economy in large numbers.

Do you believe in things being offered to a woman just because of her gender? When will we reach a parity where gender does not matter?
I did not receive any special treatment in my 50 + years of career and I am not for it. Today women are empowered and it will take some time to reach there, but it will happen. In the army, Air Force women are ready to take challenges. Allowing reservations based on gender loses their value. If you're offered some position just because you're a woman, the stigma will remain. However, providing a safe and supportive ecosystem for women will go a long way in reaching the stage – gender does not matter. He or she is a professional.

What do you have to say about women reservation?
Throughout my career spanning over 50 years, I have not received any preferential treatment, nor do I believe we need it, especially for educated women. Women may have started later, so it will naturally take time to catch up with men. Even women in rural areas exhibit remarkable microfinancing and management skills. Regardless of their occupation, women are empowered, whether in tech or working as house helpers. Women are everywhere today, and if they are not in a particular field, it's solely due to their personal choice. Managing home is also a very responsible and full-time profession.

Can you tell us about your ITI days?
Then ITI, BEL and HAL were very big names, and getting a job in these organisations was prestigious. ITI was a real star performer in those days. I owe all the technology I have learnt to ITI. I worked on a Technology transfer project with Nippon Electric Company (NEC), Japan. I went to Japan as the leader of a team of 45 engineers from ITI, and BEL. The first time I went there, the Japanese were sceptical as there were hardly any women in NEC back then. I was also sent to Darjeeling for a defence project. Women engineers working in the public sector in the 1970s was big back then. In 1971, I was sent to ITI Kharagpur for a digital microwave course. Later, I was sent to the US, Japan and many other countries for project related work. Not that it was a smooth run, I had my share of hurdles and disappointments, but moving ahead is the Mantra.

You were the first woman in many places, be it at your engineering colleges or your workplaces. You cleared the way for other women to follow in your path. What do you have to say about that?
If we think about our growth and our promotions, we will not get any support from others. However, when you start thinking about a bigger cause and work towards that, everyone will support you. Also, they will become part of you in your journey. That was how I achieved many things.

Can you share your experience at Indian Telephone Industries (ITI) and Infosys?
The ITI experience was incredible and I learnt technology, people management in ITI. I felt there was a lack of management initiative to change things and catch up with technology and something was not working for me. and I quit the job at ITI. Later, I moved to Infosys as a telecom domain expert. Being with Infosys was great where I moved from my telecom hardware domain at ITI to telecom and other product related software at Infosys. Systems and processes, quality and timely delivery at Infosys made me a better leader.

You have seen the Information Technology (IT) boom since the beginning. Can you tell us about the role of women in the IT boom?
The IT boom happened after 1999 with the Y2K project, which saw many IT companies grow leaps and bounds. Women joined the Information Technology (IT) and IT-enabled Enabled Services (ITES) industry. Nearly 50+ percent of the women are in the ITES industries. IT services also saw steady growth to over 30% women. However, at senior management and board levels, we need to have more women. Of late, I have seen many women entrepreneurs, which is a positive sign.

Can you share how your association with ELCIA started?
ELCIA was formed to find ways to improve infrastructure in Electronics City and to have better roads for commuting. ELCIA is a unique organization which has continuously reinvented itself and remained relevant. ELCIA has carved a niche for itself among associations for its unique journey for the last 30 years. ELCIA has facilitated all round development of Electronics City by managing the estate for 20 years, creating entities like ELCIA Trust, ELCITA, ELCIA Cluster and now ELCIA Skill Development Centre (ESDC). Each one has been created with different purposes, but the goal is business growth of companies and quality of life of citizens. One of our staff lost her child as she had a miscarriage due to the bad condition of Hosur Road which was 2-laned then. We took 40,000 signatures from the employees and met the then Chief Minister HD Kumaraswamy and urged him to speed up the completion of the NICE Road that would make people's commute easy. My association with ELCIA started as an advisor. My mandate was to get Electronics City declared as Industrial Township Area from the Government of Karnataka. GoK had amended Municipality Act 1964 to include Industrial Township in 2003. Peenya Industries Association had already applied for it and so did ELCIA. From 2010 to 2012, for two and a half years I walked the corridors of Vidhan and Vikas Soudha to get township approval. With the support of ELCIA President, committee members, eCity Industrial Township was approved in 2013. This is the first and only Industrial Township area self-Governed based on municipality Act in the whole of India.

How many companies are there and how many employees?
There are about 160 companies and over 2 lakh employees in them.

Can you tell us more about he success of ELCITA?
ELCITA has completed 10 years and has been a very successful model. This model is worth replicating in all Industrial areas in Karnataka and across the country. The credit for ELCITA must also go to the public. The data of everything is monitored daily and is used for Governance using smart City command centre. Decision making will be better based on the right data.

The changed guidance value has raised a lot of issues. What is ELCIA's take on it?
ELCIA members pay tax to ELCITA, not to BBMP. When I attended the FKCCI meeting, the consensus was that all the organisations were not happy with this revision. This method of computing tax increases the tax for property owners each year particularly in areas of high guidance value.

There was a proposal by BBMP that tax collected by the association should be given to the government.
Thirty percent of the property tax collected are transferred to the panchayats and cess as applicable must be paid to Govt.

What about women's safety?
Government and Companies do make efforts to create a safe environment for women. It is essential that women are aware of the safety measures and use them. As a society, all of us have to work for the safety of women with active participation of women themselves. Being prepared and alert have helped in many cases.

What awareness should be done when it comes to women safety?
In schools, students are being educated on this. They are taught about good touch and bad touch. We should teach our sons to respect women. As I said earlier, it is the collective responsibility of society to take care of the safety of women. At work, it should be the commitment of the employer to have zero-tolerance when it comes to the safety of women employees.

From the 1970s to 2024, what changes have you observed in terms of women's safety?
Although the number of women was relatively lower during those years, sexual harassment was not uncommon even then. Women experienced harassment not only in the workplace, but also at home — by relatives, neighbours and acquaintances. Harassment still persists, but women are now more aware of their rights and are willing to file complaints. Many men lack the necessary skills to interact with women respectfully and some times cultural differences also come in the way. It is crucial to educate children, especially boys, from a young age.

What do you think about the skill set, productivity, loyalty and commitment in the new age engineers?
Some are of the opinion that women are more productive, which again is subjective and depends on type of work. In my profession, Skill sets are continuously changing and require continuous learning. In terms of loyalty, Not sure it works with the continuously changing ecosystem and urge to do new things. All I can say is that our engineers are smart and capable of making us proud.

Don't panic, we've water till July: BWSSB chief

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Bengaluru

BANGALORE Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) Chairman Ramprasath Manohar on Saturday said that the board has adequate water for supply in the city and its outskirts till July. His clarification comes in the wake of reports that Bengaluru is likely to face a drinking crisis in the coming days.

Manohar appealed to the media not to create panic on the matter. The board supplies 1,470 MLD of water daily. Once the Cauvery fifth stage project is commissioned on May 15, Bengaluru will get an additional 775 MLD of water. The city and its outskirts need 2,100 MLD of water, he said.

People residing on the outskirts of the city depend on borewells. Many lakes are on the verge of drying up and this has also affected them, he added. Four dams in the Cauvery basin, have sufficient water to meet the needs of the city. "The city needs only 1.54 tmcft of water a month. Apart from the city, its outskirts also depend on Cauvery water. The city and its outskirts need 17 tmcft of water till July. The dams now have 34 tmcft of water," he said.

People wait in a queue to fill water from a RO kiosk at Chickpet in Bengaluru

He said the board has appealed to those living on the outskirts, to use treated water for secondary purposes. About 1,300 MLD water is available daily. "This apart, the board will take experts' suggestions to fill the lakes in the city with treated water to help recharge the groundwater table," he added.

The board has issued a work order to drill 200 borewells and work will start soon. In the 110 villages brought under the city limits, there are only 40,000 BWSSB water connections as work on the Cauvery fifth stage project is yet to be completed. Free water is being supplied through 79 tankers to the affected areas.

Meanwhile, R Ashoka, Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Assembly, said that his party workers will protest on Monday. Reacting to this, Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar asked the Opposition parties to give constructive suggestions to overcome the shortage of drinking water.

Water released from KRS to meet needs of B'luru

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Mysuru

IN the wake of the depletion of water in the river and at the Thorekadanahalli pumping station, irrigation officials have released water from Krishnaraja Sagar Reservoir (KRS) so that the BWSSB can pump the water to the maximum capacity.

As Bengaluru city is reeling under acute water shortage with several borwells drying up, the pressure is on the BWSSB to meet the demand of 1.3 crore residents of the city. With reports of farmers drawing water for their drinking needs, cattle and festivals, the flow had reduced in the river for the last couple of days.

BWSSB authorities monitoring the pumping station have requested an increase in discharge from the reservoir so that the pumping does not suffer. Following the request, the authorities have released water into the reservoir and have kept vigil across the river to ensure that the water is not drawn by the farmers.

Sources said irrigation officials have released 3,000 cusecs of water from four crest gates of the dam on Saturday. They are likely to release another 2,000 cusecs to rush the water in the river and Thorekadanahalli located downstream near Malavalli. The city receives around 1,450 million litres per day (MLD) of water but it faces a shortfall of 1,680 MLD every day.

According to officials, the water level at the KRS is pegged at 89.24 ft as against the maximum capacity of 124.8 ft. Currently, with 15.49 ft of water, it has 7.11 thousand million cubic feet (tmc) of water. KRS chief engineer (South) Venkatesh said they have released water from KRS to increase the pressure in the river so that it would not affect the pumping of water.

Water being released from KRS dam on Saturday | EXPRESS

Groundwater depletion: Rally against govt on Monday

Bengaluru: Alleging that the state government has spent nearly Rs 13,000 crore on 'contract-oriented projects' to supply water to Kolar, Chikkaballapura and Bengaluru Rural, in the last 10 to 15 years, Karnataka Shashwata Neeravari Horata Samithi, will hold a rally against the state, and in memory of irrigation expert GS Paramashivaiah at Chikkaballapura on Monday. Shashwata Neeravari Horata Samithi president Anjaneya Reddy said, "Initially envisaged for an investment of Rs 8,300 crore, Yethinahole (lift irrigation) Project, meant to supply drinking water to these regions, has seen administrative approval of Rs 23,000 crore in the last 15 years. The project which was to help 60 lakh people get drinking water, fill tanks, improve groundwater and recharge borewells, has been facilitating pipe manufacturing contractor mafia," said Reddy. The Central Water Commission has sent a report to the state government that this is not feasible, and still, the government is going ahead claiming that it will give drinking water to the 60 lakh people. The activists also stated that the BWSSB was supposed to send tertiary treated water to tanks of these districts, to improve the groundwater table, but the semi-treated water from STPs is being pumped into tanks from Hebbal-Nagawara valley and Koramangala-Challaghatta valley.

EXPRESS READ

If students acquire skills, opportunities will come, says Accenture MD

Bengaluru: Accenture believes that if students acquire skills, more opportunities will come, said MD of Accenture Vedagarbham at a program organized to distribute scholarships to students of BNM Institute of Technology (BNMIT) here on Saturday. The scholarship was for academic, sports NCC and economically backward sections. "Compared to earlier days, there are abundant job opportunities in India today. Big reputed companies are opening their units in India, generating employment opportunities. If students speak fluent English and acquire skills, more opportunities will be provided," he said. BNM charity trustees Eishwar N Maanay, Director of the college Prof TJ Rama Murthy, additional director of the college Dr SY Kulkarni, Principal of the College, Dr GN Krishnamurthy and others were present.

Women play pivotal role in every society: Roshani Gowda

Bengaluru: "The role of women in every society and administrative system cannot be overstated. A state or government that overlooks women, undermines its own health and stability," said Roshani Gowda, the president of Women's Government Employees Association. She was speaking at the Media Seva Ratna award ceremony organized by the Karnataka Media Journalist Union on the occassion of its fifth anniversary, as well as International Women's Day, here on Thursday. Inaugurating the event, senior police officer D Roopa said that women should be encouraged to cultivate optimism, boldness, courage, and capability across all domains. They deserve the opportunity to lead independent lives within the social system. Women journalists including Vidyashree from Suvarna News, Shilpa Nag from Zee News, Punyavathi from Vijaya Karnataka, Mamata from Suvarna News, Vidya from News First, Pratibha Raman from NDTV, Neeti Venugowda from TV5 and Vidya Rashmi from Republic Kannada were felicitated with Madhyama Ratna award.

To facilitate hassle-free travel to participate in the state-level Karnataka Police Run 10K/5K scheduled on Sunday, BMRCL will commence its Metro train services on Purple and Green lines from all the four terminals at 6 am instead of 7 am

Modi Sarkar Ki Guarantee
Means Guarantee of fulfilling every Guarantee
Scan for more information
Astha Ka Samman, Dharoharon Ka Vikas
Hamara Sankalp Viksit Bharat
cbc 22201/13/0338/2324

AI Express flight from B'luru to M'luru departs 4.5 hours late

ENS @ Bengaluru

AN Air India Express flight from Bengaluru to Mangaluru on Saturday evening suffered a delay of 4 hours and 32 minutes, inconveniencing passengers. The travel time between the two cities is only 90 minutes. Flyers were made to board their flight, sit inside for two hours and then made to alight , said a passenger. Operational reasons have been cited as the issue by the airline.

The flight was supposed to take off from Terminal 2 of Kempegowda International Aiport and reach Mangaluru at 8 pm. Instead, it took off around 11.02 pm. The 737 Max8 aircraft is expected to reach Mangaluru airport at 12.04 am on Sunday (March 10) now.

Flyer Rumaan posted on X, "Worst experience with @AirIndiaX IX-1795 at the Blr airport today. First they made us wait near the gate for 40 min. Then boarded us into the flight and now they say there's a technical issue with the flight while we are still inside the flight."

The airline responded, "Operational issues necessitated the delay, ensuring your safety remains our priority. Rest assured, we are ready for take-off in a while."

HOLY GATHERING

Devotees take part in Brahma Rathotsava at Kadu Malleshwara temple, Malleswaram in Bengaluru on Saturday | SHASHIDHAR BYRAPPA

2 killed in separate incidents

ENS @ Bengaluru

In two separate incidents on Friday, two men including a rowdy sheeter were murdered in the city. The incidents took place at Cottonpet and Byatarayanapura police limits.

In Byatarayanapura police limits, Yogesh (23) was stabbed to death over a trivial row. The victim, while dancing at a programme organised in a temple, 'accidentally' stamped the foot of one of the accused. This led to an argument between the two. The accused then followed Yogesh, and stabbed him.

While trying to escape, the victim tried jumping over a gate, and it was suspected that he must have died after the gate's rod pierced his chest.

However the police checked the CCTV footage and found that the accused chased and attacked him. Yogesh was a resident of Girinagar, and worked at a bike service station. Police arrested the four accused.

In another incident, rowdy sheeter Shiva (35), a resident of Flower Garden, was hacked to death near his house in Cottonpet police limits. He was returning home on Friday around 9.30 pm, when a few miscreants, waiting for him, hacked him to death. Old rivalry is said to be the reason.

CERVICAL CANCER

Min: PPP model for HPV vax drive

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

KARNATAKA will collaborate with the healthcare stakeholders, including the private sector, to create awareness about cervical cancer and push for vaccination programme, to stop preventable deaths, said Health Minister Dinesh Gundu Rao. He was delivering the inaugural address at the National Summit on Cervical Cancer organised together by ECHO India, the Karnataka Obstetrics and Gynaecology Society, ARTIST for HER, and the Healthcare Sector Skill Council (HSSC), on Saturday. The event brought together policymakers and healthcare experts, to chart a path forward against the disease.

Rao responded to a plea by renowned healthcare leader Dr Hema Divakar, FIGO Division Director; and Chair, Well Woman Healthcare Committee, who emphasized the need to accelerate action to eliminate the disease affecting women through a robust vaccination programme backed by technological support.

"I am open to a public-private-participation (PPP) model to ensure the government's health schemes benefit women. We are waiting for the allocation of funds from the Union government, to make the vaccine affordable, and launch a vaccination drive," Rao added.

Dr Hema pointed out that India accounted for 25 per cent of the global cervical cancer cases, and there is a need to accelerate action to eliminate the disease. Cervical cancer is the fourth most common cancer in women. The highest rates of cervical cancer incidence and mortality are seen in low-and-middle-income countries, reflecting on lack of access to national HPV vaccination and treatment services, she said.

"It is unfortunate that India records 75,000 deaths annually (against 300 deaths in developed nations) due to cervical cancer, and it can be prevented," stressed Dr Hema, who heads the Asian Research & Training Institute for Skill Transfer (ARTIST).

ARTIST is partnering with the Karnataka State Obstetrics & Gynaecology Association, HSSC, ECHO India, and other healthcare champions to advance this movement.

Cops must crack down on illegal bike taxis: Assn

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

"ALL types of bike taxis, including electric-bike taxis are now banned in the state. Private companies like Rapido which are providing the bike taxi services, where people are linking their own private vehicles (white board petrol run vehicles) is a clear violation of Motor Vehicle Act, which was reiterated by the state government's notification dated March 6," said Nataraj Sharma, the president of Federation of Karnataka State Private Transport Associations.

"Now, the onus is on the state transport department and the traffic police to take action against the vehicles that are operating as bike taxis," added Sharma while addressing the media here on Saturday.

"Companies like Rapido are stating that the bike taxi ban doesn't apply to them. It is illegal to operate personal white board vehicles as bike taxis, which the company has been doing from past many years. Now, the transport department has to crackdown on Rapido, and all those who use the platform to operate bike taxis illegally," he said.

The association members said that the transport department has to take action against, and seize vehicles that double as illegal bike taxis.

4 injured in a welding cylinder explosion

Bengaluru: Four people working in a car garage on the 1st cross, 2nd stage KHB Colony near Havanur Circle, Basaveshwaranagar, sustained injuries in a welding gas cylinder fire explosion on Saturday evening around 5.50 pm. Two fire tenders were pressed into service to douse the fire. Garage owner George and worker Shivu sustained severe burn injuries. The garage was functioning from a vacant plot in a residential area next to Balamuri Ganesha temple. The impact of the explosion was so severe, that the windows and doors of the neighbouring buildings were also damaged. Over six cars in the garage were completely damaged, and one car parked inside the compound of a residential building next to the garage was also damaged. The Magadi Road police have registered a case.

Sri Siddaramaiah
Hon'ble Chief Minister
Govt. of Karnataka

Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs and Legal Metrology Department

Foundation stone Laying programme for

"Aahara Soudha"

by

Sri Siddaramaiah, Hon'ble Chief Minister

Date: 11 March, 2024, Monday at 11.00 AM

Venue: No.1, Ali Asker Road, P.B. No. 175, Bengaluru-560052

Sri D.K. Shivakumar
Hon'ble Deputy Chief Minister
Govt. of Karnataka

Salient Features

- Construction in an area of **30000 Sq. ft.**
- Being constructed at a cost of **Rs.49.50 Crore**
- Construction of Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs Office complex and Laboratory related to Legal Metrology Department
- Mega Building consisting of four floors
- Two floored adequate Car Parking

August Presence

Sri D.K. Shivakumar
Hon'ble Deputy Chief Minister
Govt. of Karnataka

Sri K.H. Muniyappa
Hon'ble Minister for Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs and Legal Metrology
Govt. of Karnataka

Sri K.H. Muniyappa,
Hon'ble Minister for Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs and Legal Metrology & Bengaluru Rural District In-charge Minister participating in a function.

DELIVERED AS PROMISED...

FREE BUS Service for women across Karnataka

Gruha Jyothi Up to 200 Units of Free Electricity to each home

Anna Bhagya 10kg Free Food Grains (per person / per month)

Gruha Lakshmi ₹2000 per month to female head of the family

Yuva Nidhi ₹3000 Per month for Graduates | ₹1500 Per month for Diploma Holders

As enshrined in our Constitution - to safeguard public property and to abjure violence is the fundamental duty of every citizen of India.

Hassan JDS MP Prajwal Revanna wants his uncle and former chief minister H D Kumaraswamy to contest from either Mandya or Kolar Lok Sabha constituencies

POLL POSITION

Second list of candidates likely to come out today: BSY

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Shivamogga

FORMER CM and BJP Parliamentary Board member **BS Yediyurappa** has said the party's second list of candidates for the upcoming Lok Sabha elections, including those of Karnataka, will be released on Sunday after discussions with the prime minister.

Speaking to reporters in the city on Saturday, he said, "I am scheduled to travel to New Delhi today. The election committee meeting will convene in the evening, which will be attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. A preliminary meeting was already conducted under the leadership of the party's national president JP Nadda and Union Home Minister Amit Shah. The finalisation of the second list is expected to conclude today itself." Addressing the issue of seat allocation to JDS, he remarked, "The seat-sharing with JDS is still under discussion. A final decision will be reached today too."

In response to inquiries about the possibility of many incumbent MPs not receiving tickets, Yediyurappa said there has been no deliberation on the matter. Further clarity on these questions is anticipated.

Commenting on actor Shiva Rajkumar's wife and former CM Late S Bangarappa's daughter, Geetha Shivarajkumar, being named as the Congress candidate for the Shivamogga constituency, Yediyurappa made a sarcastic remark, stating that there must indeed be a Congress candidate to contest the election.

Dr MANJUNATH TO CONTEST ON BJP TICKET, WILL SOMANNA BE ASKED TO RUN FROM JDS?

Alliance may ask former chief minister Kumaraswamy to contest from Tumakuru

DEVARAJ B HIREHALLI
@ Bengaluru

THE BJP-JDS alliance is said to have found the son-in-law of former prime minister HD Devegowda, Dr C N Manjunath, who is former director of Jayadeva Institute of Cardiovascular Sciences and Research Centre, a fit candidate to contest from the Bangalore Rural Lok Sabha seat. But it has been finding it difficult to come to a conclusion on the Tumakuru LS seat.

Even as former minister V Somanna's name is said to be finalised to contest from the seat on a BJP ticket, the local, state and even national leadership is not confident of him winning the election as surveys have favoured Congress, sources said.

With the Grand Old Party declaring former MP SP Muddahanume Gowda, a Vokkaliga, as its candidate for the seat, there are talks within the alliance whether to field Somanna as a BJP or JDS candidate. The BJP leadership, however, has asked JDS to take the Tumakuru seat, a JDS leader said. But Somanna, a Lingayat, getting many Vokkaliga votes if he contests on a BJP ticket is unlikely and he may be asked to contest from JDS, a party known to be close to Vokkaligas. But even then, Somanna may not get many Vokkaligas as he is up against a strong Vokkaliga leader, Muddahanume Gowda.

Which is why the alliance partners and even the BJP national leadership is looking at former chief minister HD Kumaraswamy to contest from the seat, as he would get both BJP and JDS votes, a BJP leader said. Kumaraswamy contesting from Tumakuru is likely to help the alliance candidate in the adjacent Bangalore Rural constituency too, he analysed.

Those cheering for Pak should be shot: Rajanna

ENS @ Tumakuru

CHIEF Minister Siddaramaiah's cabinet colleague **KN Rajanna** on Saturday said those raising pro-Pakistan slogans should be shot dead. He suggested that Karnataka should have the Uttar Pradesh model of law and order enforcement to curb anti-social activities.

Rajanna, Cooperation Minister, was replying to reporters' queries on the recent incident in Vidhana Soudha where pro-Pakistan slogans were raised allegedly by supporters of Rajya Sabha member-elect Syed Naseer Hussain of the Congress. Rajanna, a staunch supporter of Siddaramaiah, however, maintained that the incident will not dent the image of the Congress government in the state.

"There is nothing wrong in it (shooting dead). In Uttar Pradesh, houses and buildings of the accused in rioting cases have been demolished though there is no legal sanction to do so. This act has helped in curbing rioting and other anti-social activities in UP," Rajanna said.

The minister said that he expects Karnataka police to work more effectively to curb anti-social activities. There should be peace in society to achieve progress in various fields. If it is disturbed, it will affect the growth of the state, he added.

Though Siddaramaiah and Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar recently predicted that the Congress will win 20 seats in the Lok Sabha elections in the state, Rajanna said the party may win around 16 seats. As Hassan district in-charge minister, Rajanna expressed confidence that Congress candidate Shreyas Patel will win the Hassan LS seat. Being the grandson of former MP late G Puttaswamy Gowda, Shreyas enjoys the support of all communities in the district. In Tumakuru, SP Muddahanume Gowda will win, he said.

A video grab shows villagers gheraoing former Congress MLA Yathindra, preventing him from entering Muddubirahundi village on Saturday | EXPRESS

Villagers prevent Yathindra's entry into hometurf Varuna

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Mysuru

Former MLA and Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's son Yathindra's attempt to hold a public meeting in Varuna, the home constituency of his father, ended in chaos as villagers vehemently protested and prevented his entry into Muddubirahundi village, on Saturday.

The situation escalated as Yathindra arrived in Muddubiranahundi, intending to listen to the grievances of the locals. However, the villagers expressed strong opposition, blocking his entry, and even dragging him, when he attempted to conduct the Janaspandana programme. A verbal confrontation erupted between Congress workers and villagers, prompting police intervention to maintain order.

The root cause of the villagers' discontent seems to stem from unfulfilled promises regarding road construction and politicians being inaccessible. Despite numerous requests, the villagers claim to have received no satisfactory response to their concerns. However, amid the chaos, Yathindra tried to pay heed to the villagers' grievances. Despite facing unwavering opposition, he attempted to engage with the community during the Janaspandana programme. Nevertheless, the intensity of the protest compelled him to cut short the event as people started to gherao him.

Yathindra's efforts to engage with the community, albeit being met with resistance, especially ahead of the Lok Sabha election has come as a wake-up call for the state government, reminding it of the urgency to prioritise the needs and aspirations of the people, especially in constituencies where dissatisfaction runs deep.

DA CASE: LOKAYUKTA POLICE BEGINS PROBE AGAINST DKS

YATHIRAJU @ Bengaluru

THE Karnataka Lokayukta police have started the investigation into the alleged Rs 74.93 crore disproportionate assets case against Deputy Chief Minister and KPCC president **DK Shivakumar**, though the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) did not respond to the request made by them to transfer details and records of the investigation done by it till the consent granted was withdrawn by the State Government.

The investigating officers of the Lokayukta have issued notices to the various agencies seeking details of properties, income, and expenditures of Shivakumar.

The officials in Lokayukta, however, declined to specify the name of the particular agencies for which the notice was issued and divulge the details of the investigation.

The officials said that they had written to the CBI immediately after the registration of the FIR under the provisions of the Prevention of Corruption Act against Shivakumar to transfer the details of the investigation done so far because they are the primary documents of the investigation required for the probe. The CBI, however, did not respond.

The previous BJP government granted consent to the CBI on September 25, 2019, to probe the DA case against Shivakumar. However, the Congress government withdrew the consent by way of notification dated November 28, 2023, and later the case was transferred to the Lokayukta police for investigation on December 22, 2023.

The Lokayukta police, however, registered the FIR in the second week of February 2024, almost 50 days after the case was transferred to them by the State Government.

Meanwhile, the CBI has challenged the legality of transferring the FIR registered by it and transferring the case to the Lokayukta before the High Court of Karnataka. BJP MLA Basanagouda R Patil has also challenged the same. Both are pending before the HC for adjudication.

In 2017, the Income Tax Department conducted a raid on the premises belonging to Shivakumar. Based on the details found during the I-T raids, the Enforcement Directorate (ED) started its probe under the provisions of the Money Laundering Act.

As the probe revealed that Shivakumar allegedly possessed disproportionate assets for the period between 2013 and 2018 when he was a cabinet minister, the ED wrote to the State Government to conduct an investigation under the provisions of the Prevention of Corruption Act.

> **Written to CBI immediately after registration of the FIR under the provisions of the Prevention of Corruption Act against Shivakumar to transfer details of investigation** — Lokayukta officials

EXPRESS READ

HDK holds meet with Kolar JDS leaders, confident of winning seat

KOLAR: JDS state president HD Kumaraswamy held a meeting with party legislators, defeated candidates and senior leaders from Srinivasapura, Mulbagal and Siddlaghatta to zero in on a party candidate to contest from the Kolar Lok Sabha constituency. But the leaders left the responsibility of choosing the candidate for the seat to Kumaraswamy, saying it will help in winning the seat. His son and JDS Youth president Nikhil Kumaraswamy, during his visit here three days ago, had indicated that the party, which is in alliance with BJP, will get four seats -- Mandya, Kolar, Hassan and Tumkaru -- to contest the Lok Sabha elections. MLC Inchara Govindaraj said Kumaraswamy collected the opinions of all the leaders. They were confident that JDS would win the Kolar seat as three Assembly constituencies in the segment are with JDS legislators, he added.

Congress on backfoot over pro-pak slogans, cafe blast

CHIEF Minister Siddaramaiah and his party's efforts to set a narrative around alleged disparity in the devolution of grants from the BJP-led Union Government suffered a major push-back as national security issues are taking centre-stage of political discourse in Karnataka ahead of the Lok Sabha polls.

The condemnable developments in the last few days and their not-so-prudent handling by those in power in the state, has put the party on the backfoot. This is happening at a time when candidates for the LS polls are being announced and the battlelines are being drawn.

Senior Congress leaders were found wanting when they jumped the gun in the case of raising pro-Pakistan slogans in Vidhana Soudha corridors and the March 1 Rameshwaram Café blast case. Some ministers' responses raised questions over attempts to downplay the seriousness of the issues which need to be dealt with firmly without looking at them from a political prism.

The government could have acted more swiftly and shown alacrity in getting to the bottom of the case in which Congress Rajya Sabha member Syed Naseer Hussain's supporters allegedly raised pro-Pakistan slogans while they were with him celebrating his re-election to the Upper House of the Parliament on February 27. When the audio was unclear, it would have been prudent for the Congress leaders to wait for the Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL) findings instead of jumping to a defensive conclusion that no such slogans were raised as that could influence the probe by the state police.

The jurisdictional police registered a suo motu case on the same day and started the probe, while the opposition BJP took to the streets as well as raised the issue during the just concluded budget session of the state legislature. Based on the FSL report that confirmed the raising of pro-Pakistan slogans, three persons were arrested.

Meanwhile, police in Mandya arrested a BJP worker who was accused of raising a pro-Pakistan slogan in 2022. It appears bizarre why the police waited for nearly two years to take action. Even if the previous BJP government was accused of protecting its worker, who claims to have uttered the slogan during a protest without knowing its meaning, Congress has been in power in the state since May 2023. It could have acted earlier. That leaves many questions related to the handling of such serious issues unanswered.

In the Rameshwaram café blast case, Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar and Home Minister G Parameshwara's remarks on police also looking at the "business rivalry" angle came under fire from the Opposition BJP. A minister who termed it as a "silly trick" also faced the flak from the Opposition. Much of it could have been avoided.

Now, the National Investigation Agency (NIA) is probing the café blast, which appears to be an act of terror. It may not be prudent to get into the details of the case or come to any conclusion.

Politically, the developments pushed the Congress on the back-foot in AICC president Mallikarjuna Kharge's home state. Karnataka has given Congress hope and the party needs to do well in the state if it expects to improve its tally across the country.

Well aware of the challenges in the Lok Sabha polls, the government and the party had begun working on a clear strategy. It was focused on the implementation of the guarantee schemes that put money in the hands of people and was even commissioning a massive Rs 12 crore survey by appointing 1.2 lakh "Guarantee Volunteers" to know if the flagship schemes have reached people and their opinions about the scheme.

At the same time, it was also working on setting a strong narrative against the Union Government over the alleged disparity in devolution of taxes. Now, as expected, BJP will make national security one of the main poll planks alongside the achievements of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government in the last ten years.

BJP president JP Nadda, who was in Belagavi earlier this week set the tone for campaigning and gave enough indications about the line the party's central leaders are likely to take during the campaigning in Karnataka. He accused Congress of supporting terrorism and questioned AICC president Mallikarjuna Kharge and former Congress president Rahul Gandhi on their silence on the issue of Congress MP's supporters raising pro-Pakistan slogans. Hussain is a Congress Working Committee (CWC) member.

Adding to the government's woes is the acute water crisis across the state, including Bengaluru. The BJP-JDS leaders have repeatedly questioned the government over releasing Cauvery water to Tamil Nadu when the state suffered due to water shortage. It is likely to be an issue in the Old Mysuru region.

The Congress may have its strategies to counter the Opposition, but change in the political discourse just when the electioneering is set to pick pace, is not good news for the party. However, Deputy CM and State Congress president DK Shivakumar got some relief earlier this week when the Supreme Court quashed the Enforcement Directorate (ED) case against him.

TICKET TENSION

Conspiracy to deprive me of ticket to Lok Sabha: Shobha

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Belagavi

UNION Minister of State for Agriculture and Farmers Welfare **Shobha Karandlaje** has said that a conspiracy was being hatched to deprive her of the BJP ticket to fight the upcoming Lok Sabha elections. The minister, however, said that she would continue to work for Prime Minister Narendra Modi irrespective of whether she gets the party ticket or not.

Speaking to reporters in Belagavi on Saturday, Karandlaje said her party leadership was gathering information to ascertain why some people were opposing her candidature from Udupi-Chikkamagaluru constituency. She said the party would field a candidate based on his or her performance. "I have worked relentlessly in my constituency and would ask for the votes based on it," she said.

The Congress was asking for the votes based on the five of its guarantees in Karnataka while the BJP would face the election on the development plank, she added.

On cut in prices of fuel and LPG cylinders ahead of polls, Karandlaje said reducing prices was not related to the election and that the country was not yet self-reliant when it came to petrol and gas. "PM Modi is working on making the country self-reliant in this matter," she added.

Accusing the Karnataka Congress government of promoting anti-national elements, Karandlaje said that the government was involved in appeasing Minorities. "Those identified with PFI and now with SDPI are always present in the offices and houses of the CM and Home Minister in Bengaluru. You can ask any journalist about it. The State Government is protecting such people. On the other hand, the police are under pressure to take action against them," she said.

When Naseer Hussain was elected as Rajya Sabha member recently, at least 1,000 of his supporters were allowed inside the Vidhana Soudha without checking their past, she said. "The one who raised pro-Pakistan slogans there was present with Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's Bharat Jodo Yatra. The Congress leaders do not have the common sense to decide who should be present with their national leaders during such events," she said.

BJP state president BY Vijayendra, Leader of the Opposition in the Assembly R Ashoka and other party leaders flag off Lok Sabha election LED campaign vehicles in Bengaluru on Saturday | EXPRESS

Vande Bharat Express services from Mysuru to MGR Chennai was launched on Saturday. The Mysuru - MGR Chennai VB will depart from Mysuru at 6am and arrive at MGR Chennai at 12:20pm every day, except Wednesdays. The MGR Chennai - Mysuru VB will depart from MGR Chennai at 5pm and arrive in Mysuru at 11.20 pm every day

TDP, JSP, BJP alliance finalised, seat sharing soon

Naidu likely to concede 30 Assembly, eight LS seats to partners; of the three LS seats, Pawan may have to let go of one

P HAREESH @ Vijayawada

AFTER prolonged deliberations, the tripartite alliance between the TDP, JSP and BJP was officially finalised on Friday. A joint statement released in the evening by BJP national president JP Nadda, TDP supremo N Chandrababu Naidu and JSP chief Pawan Kalyan said, "Under the dynamic and visionary leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi Ji, Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) and the Jana Sena Party (JSP), as being committed for the progress of country and the upliftment of state and people of Andhra Pradesh, have decided to contest the ensuing Lok Sabha and Vidhan Sabha elections together in Andhra Pradesh."

However, the parties are yet to reveal details on the sharing of seats. According to the joint statement, announcement regarding the seat-sharing would be out in a day or two.

Highlighting the relationship that the BJP and TDP share, the statement read, "TDP joined the NDA in 1996 and has worked together successfully in Atal Ji's and Narendra Modi Ji's government. In 2014, the TDP and the BJP fought the Lok Sabha and Assembly elections together." It may be pertinent to note that the JSP had supported both parties in the 2014 elections in Andhra Pradesh.

Naidu and Pawan have held two rounds of talks with the BJP leadership in New Delhi since Thursday. As reported earlier by this newspaper, TDP is likely to concede 30 Assembly and eight Lok Sabha seats to its alliance partners. It has also been learnt that the JSP, which was earlier allotted three Lok Sabha constituencies, might have to let go of one seat. According to sources, JSP chief Pawan Kalyan is likely to contest the Kakinada MP seat.

Anakapalle, which was given to the JSP earlier, ST-reserved Araku, Rajampet, Rajahmundry, Eluru and either Hindupur or Tirupati Lok Sabha seats are likely to be allotted to the saffron party. According to sources, the seat-sharing deliberations between the parties hit a roadblock over the crucial Visakhapatnam and Vijayawada Lok Sabha constituencies.

As the TDP is unlikely to concede the Vijayawada Lok Sabha seat, former Rajya Sabha member Sujana Chowdary might be fielded from Eluru, while another former RS MP CM Ramesh might contest from Anakapalle rather than Visakhapatnam. BJP State unit president D Purandeswari is likely to enter the poll fray from Rajahmundry, while national leader Y Satya Kumar or religious seer Swami Paripoornananda Swamy may be fielded from Hindupur. Former chief minister of united Andhra Pradesh N Kiran Kumar Reddy is expected to contest the Rajampet seat and former MP Kothapalli Geetha could be the imminent pick from Araku. Additionally, the BJP is likely to contest the Araku Assembly seat, apart from Visakhapatnam North, Dharmavaram in Anantapur district, Kaikalur and Srikalahasthi seats, sources said.

Following the announcement of the alliance, the TDP supremo interacted with party leaders for the second consecutive day and urged them not to feel dejected, if they have lost the opportunity to contest the elections. He held a video conference with senior leaders and elaborated on the reasons necessitating the alliance in the State.

DMK SEALS ALL DEALS WITH I.N.D.I.A PARTNERS

S KUMARESAN @Chennai

THE INDIA alliance led by the DMK in Tami Nadu got a head-start for the Lok Sabha polls as the ruling party completed the seat-sharing talks with all its partners on Saturday. The Dravidian major, after much wrangling, inked agreements with Congress and Kamal Haasan's Makkal Needhi Maiyam on Saturday. The party has allotted 10 Lok Sabha seats, including the lone Puducherry seat, to the grand old party, a repeat of the 2019 numbers. The MNM would get one Rajya Sabha seat.

A Congress delegation led by AICC general secretary Mukul Wasnik, KC Venugopal, Tamil Nadu in-charge Ajoy Kumar, and TNCC president K Selvaperunthagai met Chief Minister M K Stalin at the DMK headquarters, Anna Arivalayam, to finalise the agreement. After arriving at a consensus on the number of seats, Stalin and Selvaperunthagai inked the pact. Venugopal said the DMK-led combine would win all 40 seats in Tamil Nadu and Puducherry. "We will fight together and win together," he said.

As per the poll pact, the Congress party was given nine Lok Sabha seats in TN and the lone Puducherry seat. The final seat matrix in the DMK alliance is as follows: Congress-10, CPM-2, CPI-2, VCK-2, MDMK-1, IUML-1, KMDK-1, and DMK-21. The announcement on constituency details is expected to be made in the next few days after discussion with all alliance partners. The DMK has wrapped up its seat-sharing talks a day before its scheduled interview with candidates for the election.

Kamal Haasan's MNM also officially became part of the INDIA bloc after the actor entered into the poll pact with the DMK. As per the agreement, MNM will not take part in the upcoming parliament general election but will be granted a Rajya Sabha seat in the 2025 election.

Congress leader KC Venugopal with Tamil Nadu Congress Committee president K Selvaperunthagai and other leaders as they meet DMK president MK Stalin on Saturday

Suspense still on over BJD-BJP alliance, Patnaik's statement creates flutter

Bhubaneswar: As suspense over an alliance between the BJD and BJP continued on Saturday, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik's remark that rumour and lies are very bad things in politics has created ripples in political circles here. The cryptic remark by the chief minister came in response to a question from 5T chairman VK Pandian in a social media post. Pandian asked the chief minister what is very bad in politics. "Rumour and lies are very bad things in politics," the chief minister stated. Though the statement of the chief minister does not directly point towards the alliance negotiations between the two parties, it should be taken in the background of the denial by state BJP president Manmohan Samal and Odisha in-charge Vijay Pal Singh Tomar about talks on seat sharing between the two political parties. Despite their public posturing, sources in both the parties believe that seat sharing talks are going on secretly between the top leadership. In this background, the remark of the chief minister seems to be well calibrated. Developments at the national level also point towards possibility of a big development on Sunday after the return of PM Narendra Modi to the national tomorrow.

Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw inaugurates the Vande Bharat sleeper coach body structure at BEML in Bengaluru on Saturday | ALLEN EGENUSE J

Will test VB sleeper coach trains for 6 months: Vaishnaw

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Bengaluru

THE Railways will test 10 Vande Bharat sleeper variant trains for six months and go for mass production, Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw has said. He was speaking after unveiling the carbody structure of Vande Bharat's sleeper coaches at the Bharat Earth Movers Limited (BEML) facility in Bengaluru on Saturday.

The minister also added that the sleeper variant of the Vande Bharat will provide comfort and easy mobility to passengers. "It is a historic moment for Railways and for the country to launch the carbody structure of the much-awaited Vande Bharat sleeper version that will provide easy mobility to commuters and offer various comforts with global standards," he elaborated.

He further added the design of the frame and roof of the coach are of a new design and now the furnishing will start and soon the coach will be rolled out of the factory and after six months of testing, mass production will begin.

Also, Amrit Bharat trains are successful and the one that runs between Malda and Bengaluru has registered 100% occupancy. "100 more such trains are being built," he said.

According to sources in BEML, the carbody structure is crafted with high-grade austenitic stainless steel, featuring crash-worthy elements integrated into the crash buffers and couplers. Complying with stringent safety standards, all materials and aggregates in the train set adhere to the fire standard requirements as per EN45545 HL3 grade. Earlier in the day, Vaishnaw hailed Nivetti Systems which is into secure networking and cyber security products for developing the 2.4tbps router.

TECHNICAL FEATURES OF VANDE BHARAT SLEEPER TRAINS

- Each Vande Bharat sleep variant train set will come with 16 coaches
- Maximum speed during operation service-160 kmph
- Maximum speed during testing-180 kmph
- Total capacity per train set-823
- Modular pantry
- Shower with hot water in 1st Air Condition coach
- Special berts and toilets for differently abled.

NIA releases more images of blast suspect

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Kalaburagi Police Commissioner R Chetan confirmed the arrival of the NIA team in Kalaburagi, but said the team had not shared anything about the inspection in Kalaburagi with the local police.

Meanwhile, NIA on Saturday afternoon released four more images of the suspect seeking citizen cooperation in identifying the cafe blast suspect.

The NIA has also given their mail ID for citizens with any information along with the two official phone numbers. These images are the closest images of the suspect which NIA managed to get through the CCTV footage. In these images, the suspect is not wearing a cap unlike the initial images released by them along with a cash reward of Rs 10 lakhs for the informant who correctly identifies the prime accused.

The images were captured in CCTVs at Ballari bus stand on the day of the blast. He is seen walking outside the bus stand. From there, he hired an auto and went into the town. On Friday, the NIA had released two video footage of the suspect while traveling in buses. Going by the images released on Saturday, it is evident that the suspect has changed his shirts that he wore. Backpack, black shoes and jeans pant however remain intact.

On March 6th afternoon, the NIA had released the first picture of the suspect on platform X. They had also announced a cash reward of 10 lakh rupees for information about the bomber.

NIA CONTACT DETAILS:

The contact details and the mail ID released by the NIA are: 080-29510900, +918904241100, Mail: info.blr.nia.gov.in.

The postal address is: SP, National Investigation Agency, 3rd floor, BSNL Telephone Exchange, 80 ft Road, HAL 2nd Stage, Indiranagar, Bengaluru-560008, Karnataka.

5th gen fighter jet to take to skies by 2028

RAMU PATIL @Bengaluru

INDIA'S most advanced and lethal aircraft that is taking shape in Bengaluru got a big boost earlier this week after the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS), headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, approved a Rs 15,000-crore fifth-generation Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft (AMCA) project. If everything works out as planned, the first aircraft will take to the skies by the end of 2028.

The Bengaluru-based Aeronautical Development Agency (ADA) has completed the design phase of AMCA and is ready to get into the development phase. AMCA is considered to be the next mega aircraft project after Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) Tejas, which is a four/four-plus generation aircraft.

"We will be building five prototypes. The first is expected to fly in four-and-half years," Krishna Rajendra, Project Director, AMCA, told The New Sunday Express. Stealth is one of its key characteristics and the aircraft will be able to complete its mission and return to base without being detected by enemy radars. Unlike the 4th generation aircraft that carry weapons on the wings and under the fuselage, in the 5th generation fighters, weapons will be carried in the internal weapon bay. They will not be visible. Whenever necessary, the belly opens, and weapons will come out, just before firing. As engine takes air and that is the major source of backscatter, to hide it, the aircraft will have serpentine air intake. All these features will reduce the radar signature of the aircraft and make it more lethal.All five prototypes that will be built by ADA will undergo flight testing and they will be ready for commencement of production by the end of 10 years, he said. They expect some orders by then and start production and inducting the aircraft. Currently, the aircraft development will go with the GE 414 engines. It will be a much more lethal aircraft as it can complete its mission without being detected, said the Project Director.

The LCA programme and the contribution of those who worked on it provided the foundation for the AMCA project, said AK Ghosh, former Project Director of AMCA. He was associated with the project from the beginning, from conceptualisation, technology building and design, till he retired from ADA in January 2023.

No Congress K'buragi LS candidate yet, here's why...

DEVARAJ B HIREHALLI @Bengaluru

Though the Congress Election Committee (CEC) cleared candidates for 14 Lok Sabha seats in Karnataka, the party was forced to withhold the decision on several seats, especially Kalaburagi, from where AICC president Mallikarjun Kharge hails.

As Kharge has decided not to contest the LS polls as he has to campaign extensively across the country, his son-in-law Radhakrishna Doddamani has been selected as the party candidate for Kalaburagi, sources said.

But if his candidature had been announced, the other prominent Scheduled Caste leaders in the party would have heightened the pitch for including their close relatives in the list, the sources added.

Food and Civil Supplies Minister KH Muniyappa wants a ticket for his daughter and KGF MLA Roopakala M from Kolar, Excise Minister RB Timmapur for his son Vinay from Chitradurga and Social Welfare Minister Dr HC Mahadevappa for his son Sunil Bose from Chamrajanagar.

That was why the high command decided to withhold the decision on the Kalaburagi seat. But Radhakrishna has already started meeting party leaders and workers in Kalaburagi as part of preparation for the Lok Sabha polls as the Election Commission of India will issue the notification anytime soon, the sources said. For the Chitradurga seat, though former MP BN Chandrappa was picked, the decision was withheld. On Saturday, Timmapur's supporters met Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and alleged that Chandrappa is not from the SC (Left) community and they have documents to prove it. They urged him not to give the ticket to Chandrappa.

Meanwhile, Siddaramaiah has given the go-ahead for Muniyappa's daughter Roopakala to contest from Kolar, sources said. But scores of Congress workers from Kolar who got wind of the decision thronged Siddaramaiah's house and opposed her candidature, claiming that none of the surveys including the party's is in favour of either Muniyappa or Roopakala contesting from Kolar. "If their family members are given the ticket, the party will get drubbed," a leader said.

In Chamarajanagar, with Mahadevappa not willing to contest, the party is searching for a candidate and may spring a surprise, the sources said.The party has announced Raju Alagur as its candidate for Vijayapura (reserved) LS seat. Over the next few days till the next list is announced on March 14, Siddaramaiah and KPCC president and Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar will face pressure from all quarters for their candidates to be included as candidates.

STRAYED AWAY

Stray cattle eat waste dumped on Marina beach in Chennai on Saturday

Siddu: Increase power generation to 60k MW

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Bengaluru

To meet the rising demand for power, the generation too should increase. In the next seven years, power generation will be increased from the existing 32,000MW to 60,000 MW in the state, said Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, here on Saturday.

At present, 63% of power generated is through renewable energy and the rest from conventional sources. Farmers are being given seven hours of power in three phases. Under the Kusuma B and C schemes, with 80% subsidy (30% from Centre and 50% from state), farmers will be able to set up solar-enabled IP sets, where the motor, meter, panel and wires will be provided by the government, he said. Farmers should make most of the scheme to become independent and empowered to increase agricultural activities, he added.He was speaking at the launch of the Raita Soura Shakti Mela, the app and solar panels at KPTCL pump station on the campus of University of Agricultural Sciences, GKVK in Bengaluru.

The government will also help farmers in increasing cultivation and exports. In the last decade, land holdings of farmers have come down drastically, while cultivable area too has decreased. That is why the government is encouraging farmers to take up integrated farming, he said. Energy Minister KJ George said 600 substations have been identified and tenders called for 107. The Pavagada model will be followed, where land will be leased out and an additional charge is taken annually from the lessee and the money will be used for the development of the area and panchayat limits, he added.

EXPRESS READ

Letter threatens to blow up B'gavi temple

Belagavi: A letter threatening to blow up a Ram temple in Nipani, near Belagavi, was found by the Belagavi police on Saturday. The letter threatened to blow up the temple on March 20 or 21 massively. A police source confirmed the recovery of the threat letter and said a similar letter was found recently in Nipani on February 7.

Educationist, former MLA Vasu passes away

Mysuru: Former MLA and prominent Congress leader Vasu breathed his last on Saturday morning after battling illness for several months. He was 72. Vasu served as the political secretary to former chief minister M Veerappa Moily. A former mayor, Vasu also won on Congress ticket from the Chamaraja constituency in 2013.

India to emerge as key chip hub: Min

ENS @Bengaluru

THE semiconductor ecosystem, including fab, Assembly, Testing, Marking, and Packaging (ATMP) units, chemicals, gases, and now equipment and machinery will be manufactured in India. With this, we target to become a major player in the semiconductor value chain," said Ashwini Vaishnaw, Minister for Railways, Communications, Electronics, and Information Technology, during the commissioning of the Applied Materials India Validation Centre at the Applied Materials Campus in Kadugodi on Saturday. The inauguration was done a few days after the Union Cabinet approved proposals for the establishment of three semiconductor plants, including a mega fab.

Speaking to the media, the union said, "This marks a decisive moment for India, reaffirming its commitment to Atmanirbhar Bharat and Viksit Bharat. With this, India aims to emerge as a major player in the global semiconductor manufacturing industry by 2029, fulfilling its promise of self-reliance and signalling a significant leap forward for the nation." He added that the units will produce chips catering to diverse sectors such as defense, automotive, and telecommunications.

3 forest mins to meet today

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Bengaluru

To mitigate conflict and ensure better coordination, forest ministers of Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Kerala will meet at Bandipur Tiger Reserve on Sunday.

The meeting gains significance after a man was allegedly trampled by a makna in Wayanad. "Tripartite meeting at the level of DCFs happens once in three or six months. Meetings at the level of principal chief conservator of forests happen annually. It is the first time that ministers are meeting," said PCCF, wildlife, Subhash Malkhade.

Forest Minister Eshwar Khandre said this is a major milestone in mitigating conflicts and for better coordination among states.

"Reality is merely one-tenth of the iceberg that one sees above the surface, art the remaining nine-tenths of it that lies below

Anita Desai

CONGRESS FACED WITH MAKE OR BREAK ELECTIONS

THE THIRD EYE

SHANKKAR AIYAR
Author of *The Gated Republic, Aadhaar: A Biometric History of India's 12 Digit Revolution*, and *Accidental India*
(shankkar.aiyar@gmail.com)

HISTORY tells us that outcomes of epic battles are defined and determined by scale and momentum. The 2024 election is a contest between the BJP led by the omnipresent Narendra Modi, and a fragmented, oftentimes politically dysfunctional opposition. There is no ruling out surprises or the possibility of miracles in democracies. There is the David vs Goliath situation where the underdog, armed with slings and stones, overcome a stronger opponent. The Congress party will need more than a miracle to sustain its relevance.

The Congress is battling for mind space in this make-or-break contest. The Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra has carved a frame of argument for Rahul Gandhi and the party. It has identified grievances and the aggrieved, and is competing with the BJP in a Churchillian fashion on social media and on the ground. This week, the party found a raw nerve in the political economy and announced a new deal for the youth—30 lakh government jobs, ₹1-lakh apprentice scheme for graduates and diploma holders, end to paper leaks and social security for gig workers.

The idea is up for debate. The challenge for the Congress is to establish its credibility. In 2019, it announced reservation of a third of government jobs for women, but the idea did not find ready acceptance in Congress-ruled states. Ironically, it found place in the BJP-ruled Madhya Pradesh, and Uttarakhand.

In the arena of politics, victors are distinguished from the vanquished by the footprint of ideas illuminated by icons. Congress's reign was defined by Jawaharlal Nehru, who presented the idea of an India larger than its geographic and economic imprint, Indira Gandhi, who built her equity on nationalism and welfare, and Rajiv Gandhi's vision of a technologically modern India. In less than a decade, Modi conquered public imagination and straddles the spectrum. Brand Modi represents the idea of India as a rising power, the concept of muscular nationalism, the amplification of pro-poor welfare and the adoption of technology in governance. Ergo, the Congress must carve a new space.

Traditionally, the Congress has crafted responses to represent all things to all people. Indira Gandhi used the Left to sustain power. Rajiv Gandhi courted cultural and ideological ambivalence illustrated by the Shah Bano and Shilanyas episodes. Call it realpolitik. In contrast, the Congress in the past decade is seen as socio-politically disconnected. It has ceded ground on economic reforms despite being the party which unveiled liberalisation.

Political affiliation is propelled by postures and trade-offs which bolster alliances. In 2004, Sonia Gandhi walked across to wish and befriend her neighbour Ram Vilas Paswan and, later, a jamboree of parties who had stood against the Congress to form the UPA. In 2024, it has faced ignominy with one of the founders of the INDIA bloc defecting, potential allies such as TDP switching sides and TMC refusing to play ball.

Compare this with the BJP. To borrow a phrase from personal finance, the Modi-led BJP approaches politics as a systematic investment plan. Every move is aimed towards improving returns. It has appeased and assuaged segments and communities with national awards. Deploying the concept of impermanence as the constant in politics, it wooed back Nitish Kumar, is inducting the TDP, and has split the Shiv Sena and the NCP. You could say the migrants sought capital protection.

Critical to the context is the dysfunction at the core of the party and its organisation. In the past, the exit of Congressmen was driven by ambitions to launch their own party. That is no longer the cause. In the past decade, Congress leaders—much like those who migrated to Hannibal's ranks during his campaign against Rome—have defected to be on the winning side. This week saw even those who have never been elected by popular vote queuing up to join the BJP.

In any contest for market share, footprint is consequential. The grand old Indian National Congress is increasingly less 'national' and has been pushed into regional corners. In the past decade, its combined tally in two Lok Sabhas is under 100. Indeed, the BJP is in power on its own or with allies in 18 states accounting for 290 Lok Sabha seats. The Congress, in comparison, is in power in states with just over 45 seats.

There is much lather about the opposition coming together. The math of past elections illuminates the fallibility of this calculus. In 2014, the BJP won 136 Lok Sabha seats with over 50 percent of the votes. In 2019, the BJP won 74 percent of the seats—that is 224—with a vote share of over 50 percent. The BJP and the Congress fought one-on-one in around 200 seats, and the BJP won over 91 percent of the seats. The debate in the public square is whether Modi in 2024 will better Modi in 2019.

In 2014, shortly after the BJP bagged a majority in the Lok Sabha, Congressman Sanjay Nirupam, who had lost from North Mumbai, quipped, "Even Modi would have lost had he contested on a Congress ticket." It was an apt summation of the state of the Congress party and the magnitude of the defeat. The prospects of the Congress, it would seem—both in terms of early opinion polls and grassroots responses—have not improved and Nirupam's sentiment continues to hold sway. The grand old party faces a do-or-die battle in the next few weeks.

E-2024: DO OR DIE FOR STATE SATRAPS

POWER & POLITICS

PRABHU CHAWLA
prabhuchawla@newindianexpress.com
Follow him on X @PrabhuChawla

IF there is war in peace time, it is during elections. Once, rulers relied on planetary configurations to choose the time of attack as advised by court astrologers. Ironically, the more things change, the more they stay the same. Electoral pundits like tycoons, market mavens, ideologically-infected intellectuals and polluted posters play number games to whet the appetite of their target audiences at cocktail parties or on TV. As the countdown to the 2024 Lok Sabha election begins, predicting the rise, fall, eclipse and elimination of leaders is their hobby.

Writing the obituary of the Congress is the usual pastime. Narendra Modi has already declared victory, predicting 370 seats for the BJP. Right-wing opinion and phoney pollsters give the Congress less than 50 MPs. In the absence of a combative national party, it is left to the opposition's regional rajas to halt the Modi juggernaut in their own fiefdoms or face extinction. Elections 2024 concerns not just Modi 3.0, but also the political permanence of the regional ideologies of Mamata Banerjee, Sharad Pawar, M K Stalin, Siddaramaiah and Revanth Reddy. Yadav scions Akhilesh and Tejashwi must prove they are worthy successors of their legendary paters who straddled their states like colossuses and played important roles in the making and unmaking of prime ministers.

The Congress is as likely to dent the BJP in a direct fight in North India as a bullfinch can hurt a hawk. A Lok Sabha majority will depend on the outcomes in UP, Bihar, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Telangana, Jharkhand, Punjab and Delhi. These states account for 348 Lok Sabha seats, of which the BJP has 169, and INDIA and its ideological allies 126 seats. The remaining MPs are from smaller regional parties such as the BRS, the Left parties and others.

A look at the survival sweepstakes in the political casino of 2024.

Uttar Pradesh will decide the future of the 50-year-old ex-CM Akhilesh Yadav, whose father's mammoth status once won the SP 36 Lok Sabha seats and almost 60 percent of the assembly benches. In 2012, Akhilesh scored in the state elections but has been on an all-round losing spree since. Ironically, he is the one who has emerged as the 'A' in Modi's TINA factor. In 2019, he allied with Mayawati, who won just five assembly seats. Now he is joined at the hip with Rahul. Modi and Yogi are boasting of a 100 percent sweep in the state's 80 seats. Will Akhilesh's popularity halt the saffron wave of Ram Mandir euphoria? With Mayawati's isolation and suspect politics, will he cross into the double-digit domain from five MPs and help the Congress add to its kitty?

Bihar, with 40 seats, will mark a new turn in the fortunes of its dynasties. Tejashwi Yadav, the 34-year-old former deputy CM, could either ride into the sunset or ascend the throne as the fitting heir of father Lalu Yadav, who lorded over Bihar for over a decade. Currently, his Rashtriya Janata Dal is zero in the Lok Sabha and its ally, the Congress, won just one seat in 2019, with the remaining 39 seats going to the BJP-Nitish Kumar combo. Since Nitish has lost his credibility as a yo-yo yokel, the junior Yadav has a chance to grab that space and become a national player. His clout will be tested this time in influencing Modi's numbers. Will Yadav open an account on his own since Lalu is ailing?

Maharashtra, with 48 seats, will decide the future relevance of Sharad Pawar and Uddhav Thackeray, both local power players with national reach. They have been dominating Maharashtra politics for decades, but recently lost their parties to defections. This election will decide whether they can retain their cadre and orgnisational support. In 2019, Pawar—whose party has a new moniker—won just four seats against the BJP-Sena alliance. The Shiv Sena got 18 seats; most of its MPs have crossed the slippery floor of opportunistic optimism to the alternative Shiv Sena of CM Eknath Shinde. Pawar, too, is bereft of nearly all his legislators. The charisma of both leaders will be taxed. Will their traditional voter base grant them the catbird seat? Will Pawar Senior and Thackeray Junior reclaim their past glory or become footnotes in the pages of time?

West Bengal is a prestige battle for Mamata Banerjee and Modi. In 2019, the BJP inflicted decisive damage on the TMC by winning 18 seats and, later, 77 in the assembly. Modi has set a target of 35 seats to achieve his target of 370. For the past two years, West Bengal has been a war zone. The feisty Mamata has vowed to throw the BJP out of West Bengal. Can she? Her personal survival and the TMC's future are precariously linked with the numbers they chalk up. Her defeat will allow the saffron standard to flutter in the political skies at the next state polls. A victory means she remains Bengal's uncrowned sovereign.

Tamil Nadu is on the cusp of a Dravidian catharsis, its identity under siege by a combative BJP. With AIADMK vanishing faster than expected, M K Stalin, 71, is facing the worst challenge to his pertinence and political skills. Of TN's 39 MPs, DMK has 23 and the Congress eight. The BJP has targeted 15 seats. Since it is betting on polarised politics to disrupt caste equations and restore Sanatan pride, Stalin's arsenal needs a new Dravidastra to win.

Kerala has never elected a BJP MP, thanks to resistance from two secular formations: the CPI(M)-led LDF and the Congress-led UDF. Both have been taking turns to keep the BJP out. For the first time, they are facing a formidable challenge from the BJP. The Congress tally of 15 MPs out of 20 is credited to its leviathan-like local leaders. The cornered Left depends on the 78-year-old Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan's red redoubtability. Will the sun sink over Vijayan's hopes and the gods open the gateway of their own country to the BJP?

All eyes are on the ability of the local leadership in Karnataka, Jharkhand, Punjab and Delhi to halt the saffron tsunami. Both Siddaramaiah and D K Shivakumar are hoping to chop the BJP numbers down from 25 to less than 15, and increase Congress's digits from zero to 10. AAP's Arvind Kejriwal and Bhagwant Mann have spurred on their workers to reduce the BJP to zero in Delhi and Punjab.

The Congress alone doesn't determine the arithmetic of the 17th Lok Sabha and the political contours of a New India. The May results will decide the end or revival of regional leaders and caste politics. Vocal for Local, or Local for Vocal Modi, will be the reigning rhetoric in states that hold the keys to Indraprastha. At stake are the tempestuous legacies of titans' terrains, dynastic determination and ideological stability. Ironically, it is not Modi's victory, but the defeat of his challengers that will decide the path Indian politics will take in the coming decades.

THIS WORLD IS FOR DOGS TOO

OPINION

NANDITHA KRISHNA
Historian, environmentalist and writer based in Chennai

THE bond between man and dog had its beginning 12-14 millenniums ago, somewhere in Eurasia, where a mutually advantageous relationship between them first emerged. The domestication of the dog and the companionship between the animal and man go back very early on the Indian subcontinent. At Bhimbetka in Madhya Pradesh, prehistoric paintings reveal several figures of dogs, including one on a leash led by a man. Terracotta figurines from Harappa include dogs wearing collars, and a collared dog begging on its haunches, obviously a result of training.

The earliest mention of the dog is in the *Rig Veda*, where Indra's divine dog Sarama pursued and recovered cows stolen by the Panis. The conversation between Sarama and the Panis brings out some interesting facts: that the dog was a herder, kept by pastoral tribes; and that the dog was deeply loyal and could not be bribed into changing camps. The *Rig Veda* refers to the dog as Vastospati, the presiding deity of the house. Many of the later associations of the dog can be traced back to the Vedas, for the *Atharva Veda* describes Rudra, a form of Shiva, as surrounded by dogs who are saluted. This association is carried over to Bhairava, an aspect of Shiva, with the dog as his companion.

Yet, today people are clamouring to kill dogs or send them away. Resident welfare associations do not want street dogs to be fed or permitted in their areas. Pet lovers and animal welfare NGOs are hounded. How did this happen?

The arrival of the British changed the sanctity accorded to dogs. The British brought their breeds, which were used to hunt dogs belonging to local villagers. Unplanned urbanisation resulted in poor garbage disposal, with food available for dogs on the streets. With the abandonment of native dogs, municipalities all over India were encouraged to kill dogs. Let's take the example of Chennai. From 100 dogs killed per day in Chennai in 1860, the Corporation was killing 16,000 a year by 1964 and 30,000 in 1985. By 1995, the numbers were as high as 135 per day. And yet, the number of human deaths from rabies and the number of dogs on the streets showed no sign of going down. In 1996, there were 120 deaths from rabies in Chennai alone.

In 1964, the Blue Cross of India, one of Chennai's oldest animal welfare NGOs, proposed that the street dog population could be controlled by animal birth control (ABC) with a mass anti-rabies vaccination programme. In 1995, appalled at the horrific methods used to kill dogs, the Blue Cross requested permission from the Commissioner of the Corporation of Madras, M Abul Hassan, to start the programme in South Chennai. The cost was met by the Blue Cross. It was befitting that the Corporation—then over 300 years old and considered the second oldest municipality in the world—was the first to implement a street dog ABC programme.

Seeing the positive results, the Animal Welfare Board of India adopted it as its policy in 1997. WHO adopted Blue Cross's ABC programme, including the name, as the most cost-effective and best way to control street dog populations. Several countries took it up, too.

Reviewing the success of ABC in places where it had been implemented as a pilot project, the Indian government passed the Animal Birth Control (Dogs) Rules 2001, introducing regulations which stopped the killing of stray animals and replacing it with ABC-AR. In 2004, WHO carried out a rabies study in 84 communities—it found that rabies cases in humans as well as the incidence of dog bites showed a dramatic drop in areas where ABC-AR was aggressively implemented. By 2001, the Jaipur Walled City showed a drop of rabies cases to zero, followed by Kalimpong by 2002, Chennai by 2006 and Tirupati by 2007. The ABC programme aims to catch street dogs, surgically sterilise them, vaccinate them against rabies and release them back to the location from where they were picked up. This a humane way of controlling the street dog population. Nature abhors a vacuum and if the dogs in an area are killed, they are quickly replaced by a new pack. Whereas a sterilised, non-aggressive dog becomes good security for its area.

The Blue Cross's birth control initiatives for street dogs were yielding results till pandemic lockdowns stopped them and dog populations grew. An unsterilised dog tends to be more aggressive, leading to more man-dog conflicts

In 2010, the Indian government accepted the recommendation to propose two new rules under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act of 1960—the Pet Shop Regulation and Breeding and Sale of Pets Rules—to further control the dog population.

Everything was going well till the arrival of Covid and the consequent lockdown. ABC-AR was stopped and the number of puppies increased dramatically in all Indian cities. Further, municipalities were tasked with the job of ABC-AR. Anything taken up by local governments gets mired in corruption, non-implementation and controversy, and this is no exception. So today, we read news about children chased by dogs, people bitten by dogs and so on. An unsterilised dog tends to be aggressive. This becomes the perfect time for vested interests to close down the ABC-AR programme and go back to killing.

To stop the proliferation of dog numbers, effective solid waste and garbage management and implementation of dog breeding and pet shop rules is essential. And, of course, aggressive implementation of ABC-AR.

Dogs have given humans love, loyalty and security for millenniums. Surely, they have a right to live with dignity. The world was made for them, too.

QUOTE CORNER

I err all the time with pronouns. People tell me they're they or he or whatever, and I forget and I have to scramble and apologise... We all stumble, and we are learning about new realities. Sometimes it's like, 'Grmph, I told you before.' It's like, 'OK!'

Judith Butler, philosopher, gender studies scholar and author of *Who's Afraid of Gender?*

Settlement is void and illegitimate from its foundation, representing an explicit call for the continuation of the spiral of violence and wars.

Palestinian Authority statement after the Israeli government this week approved more than 3,400 new illegal settler homes in the occupied West Bank

The way he thinks [about] football is completely different... And, the way he develops footballers is also unreal. That was also the main reason why I wanted to come here, you know, to work with him and to develop as a footballer.

Erling Haaland, the English Premier League top scorer at the moment with 18 goals in 22 matches, on his Manchester City manager Pep Guardiola

MAILBAG

WRITE TO letters@newindianexpress.com

Disrupt nexus

Ref: *Child's murder calls for tab on drug rings* (March 9). Unless the politician-drug mafia nexus is broken, it would be hard to disrupt the vast drug networks. Awareness campaigns, as hinted in the editorial, should be conducted in schools and colleges, as the youth fall easy prey to addiction and find it difficult to come out.

G Nataraja Perumal, Elathur

Dynasty double-speak

Many offsprings of Congress leaders are migrating to the BJP, the latest being Padmaja Venugopal, daughter of K Karunakaran. Anil Antony and Jyotiraditya Scindia fall in the same group. The BJP is in alliance with many dynastic parties. With Shiv Sena and NCP in Maharashtra, SAD in Punjab, BJD in Orissa, TDP in Andhra Pradesh, Chirag Paswan's party in Bihar, Dushyant Chautala in Haryana, and Charan Singh's grandson Jayant in UP. It shows that dynastic politics is 'banned' only for the Congress party, and is in order for the BJP.

M Haneef, Kottayam

Almost Amrish

He may not have the voice, modulation or delivery style of Amrish Puri, but US President Joe Biden put the issue of his age behind with his stinging State of the Union address, persuading and punching at his opponents with a clarity of words and thoughts. There was no personal rancour in his stings. What a contrast with his predecessor.

M Balakrishnan, Bengaluru

Water deficiency

Karnataka has gone dry. Even tankers are not able to provide succour. Five-star hotels and malls are doing good business as the well-heeled are gravitating to these oases in the Bengaluru desert for their daily ablutions. Well, the ruling government has done a magnificent job of converting a water surplus state to a water deficient one.

Akhila Gopalan, Chennai

Rahul's prospect

That Rahul Gandhi is set to contest a second time from Wayanad in Kerala speaks volumes of the desperation the Congress is in. Rahul and his party perhaps know that he has little chance from the Nehru family's traditional seats in Amethi and Rae Bareily. It is a mockery that he faces an INDIA ally as an opponent in Wayanad. The Muslim League, too, is not as zealous about Rahul contesting from Wayanad as they were in 2019.

Sanath Kumar T S, Thrissur

Empty promises

Your editorial rightly pointed out that a decade ago Narendra Modi ran for prime minister with the promise of creating 10 million jobs and is yet to make good. Rahul Gandhi, too, has now taken the plank of employment for millions for the election. All these guarantees are gimmicks. Most voters believe in freebies such as cooking gas, but are not ready to compare the price of gas when the BJP came to power a decade ago.

Rajakumar Arulanandham, Tirunelveli

Duped recruits

The recruitment of Indians into the Russian army by duping them is a matter of grave concern. It is stated that about 35 Indians have been so recruited in the Russian army; one such recruit from Telangana has lost his life. It is totally wrong for Indians to get involved in the armed conflict between Russia and Ukraine. The Indian government should use its good offices with Russia and get the men immediately repatriated. The agency which indulged in the illegal recruitments should be firmly dealt with.

K R Jayaprakash Rao, Mysuru

Convincing win

What a series win for India. The English team wanted their Bazball approach in Tests too, without realising that on surfaces that take turn and have little or no bounce, it is suicidal. India winning the series 4-1 is a great tribute to the talent pool we have. We played the series without match-winning heroes such as Kohli, Rahul, Rishabh and Pandya, and still humbled the English.

O P Swaminathan, Bengaluru

THE NEW SUNDAY EXPRESS
Chairman of the Board: **Manoj Kumar Sonthalia** Editor: **Santwana Bhattacharya**
Published by **R K Jhunjhunwala** on behalf of Express Publications (Madurai) Private Limited, at No. 1, Queen's Road, Bengaluru - 560 001 and printed by him at Express Press, Plot No. 2A, Bommasandra Industrial Area, 4th Phase, Survey No. 46, Part Yarandahalli Village, Jigani Hobli, Anekal Taluk. Bengaluru - 560 099. **Bengaluru.** Vol. 25, No.10 RNI Reg. No. KARENG\2000\03040. Phone: 080-22866893. **Copyright:** Express Publications (Madurai) Private Limited. All rights reserved. Reproduction in any manner, electronic or otherwise, in whole or in part, without prior written permission is prohibited.

POSTS OF THE DAY

Himanta Biswa Sarma @himantabiswa
For the first time in 200 years, since Assam Tea came into existence, our tea garden community is experiencing transformative development.

Randeep Surjewala @rssurjewala
The entire Group D recruitment process is flawed - once again a preparation is being made to mislead lakhs of youth in the courts and make them stumble at every step!

Mayawati @Mayawati
BSP is fighting the Lok Sabha general elections in the country on its own strength with complete preparation and strength.

Women excelled in judiciary solely on merit, says Mehta

SUCHITRA KALYAN MOHANTY
@ New Delhi

WOMEN have excelled across sectors, including the legal profession, and there are many eminent professionals who have made it big on the back of their merit, Solicitor General (SG) of India **Tushar Mehta** said on Saturday.

"Based solely on merit, solely on their competence, ladies have prospered professionally, financially, socially, culturally, and politically," Mehta said at a programme, 'Celebrating the women in the legal fraternity and their remarkable journey', organised by the Society of Indian Law Firms Ladies Group.

He said historically a wrong notion has been spread that women are weaker and there were legislative obstructions in participation of women in the legal profession in the pre-independence era.

He said women should not accept reservation-based tokenism. "You don't need tokenism, you deserve what you deserve. There is a discussion that some percentage be kept for the ladies in the judiciary, but that is not an honour being conferred upon them," he said.

Speaking on the system of administration of justice, Lalit Bhasin, president of the Society of Indian Law Firms, said 35% of subordinate judges are women and 13% in high courts, and in the Supreme Court there are only three women judges.

"As per figures of 2022, 12% women are in the constabulary level and the number declines to 8% at the officer level. In prison administration, only 14% are women and they are all stuck in the lower ranks. In the high courts in seven decades, there have been only 16 women chief justices," Bhasin said.

"In the National Human Rights Commission, which should be a shining example of fairness and gender justice, there has been no woman commissioner at all. This should be addressed," Dr Bhasin added.

BJP's second list delayed as seat-sharing talks on

CEC meet scheduled today likely to discuss inclusion of some RS MPs

RAJESH KUMAR THAKUR @ New Delhi

AMID speculation regarding the inclusion of certain Rajya Sabha MPs, who also hold Union cabinet positions, there might be a delay of one or two days in the release of the BJP's second list of candidates, even after the Central Election Committee meeting scheduled for Sunday.

There is growing anticipation that the party may nominate some Union ministers, such as Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, from various high-profile urban-dominated Lok Sabha seats. Their names are expected to be announced in the second list of candidates after approval from the CEC.

The party has scheduled the second CEC meeting on Sunday, with the presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Amit Shah, JP Nadda, and other core committee members, including Chief Ministers of BJP-ruled states, to deliberate and ultimately approve the second list of candidates for more than 150 Lok Sabha seats across various states, including Bihar, Maharashtra, and Madhya Pradesh.

According to sources, the delay in releasing the second list could be attributed to the delay in finalising seat-sharing agreements with some regional constituent parties of the NDA in Bihar, Odisha, Maharashtra, and Punjab. Nevertheless, the central leadership of the BJP is continuously engaging in meetings with leaders of these regional parties to reach an understanding on seat-sharing.

It is expected that the second list of Lok Sabha candidates will include prominent leaders, including Union ministers like Nitin Gadkari, Nirmala Sitharaman, Ashwini Choubey, RK Singh and Nityanand Rai.

In an initial decision-making process on candidatures, meetings of BJP's core groups of party leaders from Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar and Telangana were held late on Saturday evening, with party national president **JP Nadda** and Home Minister Amit Shah. Sources added that detailed discussions were held on the names of potential candidates for the Lok Sabha polls from each state until late night.

"Candidates with a non-controversial background and a strong likelihood of winning, would be shortlisted for the final panel to be presented at the CEC meeting on Sunday," said a BJP leader. The party has requested three names from every Lok Sabha constituency through the state units of the party from all states.

The CEC is likely to approve the names of candidates for more than 150 seats in various states, including Telangana and Tamil Nadu, on Sunday. "If the seat-sharing talks with allies in some states are finalised by Sunday evening, the second list of candidates could be released, probably by Monday or Tuesday," hinted a source.

It is also learned that tickets for a majority of ministers from Bihar and other states, as well as sitting MPs, are likely to accommodate some new faces, ensuring proportional representation of women in ticket sharing. "There is speculation about the inclusion of some names from the minority community as party nominees in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh," said a party leader.

ABHIJIT GANGOPADHYAY

MAMATA'S NEW FOE — A JUDGE WITHOUT A GAVEL

PRANAB MONDAL

SOURAV ROY

IN hindsight, Abhijit Gangopadhyay was a politician in waiting — a fact of which, if anything, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee had a surfeit of advance warnings. What brought Judge Gangopadhyay out from the relative facelessness that normally adorns the judiciary? That too, to being a personage whose name was ordinarily resident on the front pages and prime-time debates? A near-mission mode stance against the Trinamool Congress. From the pulpits of the High Court, he delivered one verdict after another on charges of corruption involving TMC leaders. A mortifying sequence of moral setbacks for Didi, it peeled away the layers of popular legitimacy for her party. The judge, at that time, came off as a crusader against unscrupulous politics — one who believed in doing the right thing even against the odds. A knight in shining armour.

When that armour willingly took on a saffron coating, barely a couple of months ahead of the Lok Sabha polls, it did two things. First, it retrospectively cast his past judgments in an uncertain and dubious light. Not actively negating them, because judgments are finally made on evidences, but certainly invoking the textbook description of *pre-judice*. As a consequence, it has sparked a debate on whether judges should have a cooling-off period before they plunge into engagement with domains they may have adjudicated upon. (Our answer: definitely yes, unless we wish to normalise conflict of interest.)

NEWSMAKER

Two, the BJP has got itself a sharp-tongued member of the bhadralok, even if from its outer fringes, articulating the submerged Hindutva of a class hitherto muted by Leftism. And Mamata has got herself a new foe who claims to have law on his side. The significance is pointed, given the backdrop of Sandeshkhali and the BJP's pre-poll offensive centred around it.

Born in 1962 in Kolkata, Gangopadhyay was schooled in the Bengali-medium Mitra Institution, and went to Hazra Law College. All through his student days, he acted in Bengali theatre and was a member of the group 'Amitra Chanda'. He last acted in a play in 1986. Critics would say there was a performative aspect even to gladiatorial justice-making. So it segues well into what a BJP leader said, "Gangopadhyay's comments on TMC's corruption under the banner of our party will carry weight and have a deep impact."

Beginning his career as a West Bengal Civil Service A-grade officer in North Dinajpur district, he quit and practised as a state advocate in the High Court for a decade. Elevated as an additional judge in the High Court on May 2, 2018, he became a permanent judge on July 30, 2020. It took only till November 2021 before Gangopadhyay started hitting the headlines, with a series of directions to the CBI against the West Bengal School Service Commission for alleged irregularities in recruitment. His personalised barbs, accompanying many of his orders against the school service commission, raised hackles — and suspicions — in Trinamool circles. Once he predicted "*Dhaki somet bisorjon*" — implying a final immersion of the goddess along with her entire orchestra! On another occasion, he said investigation "has reached the waist-level and it needs to reach the head". The TMC accused him of carrying on a vendetta, but was embarrassed when these remarks got huge traction, with rival parties quoting them to attack TMC on the jobs-for-cash scam. Gangopadhyay terminated the jobs of thousands of youths allegedly recruited bypassing deserving candidates. His order asking ED to probe money-laundering related to the scam led to the arrest of former education minister Partha Chatterjee, delivering a massive blow to the TMC.

Days before entering politics, he said, "My duty as a judge is over. Now it is time to enter a bigger sphere. The TMC often attacked me for my verdicts and threw an open challenge for me to face them in politics. I decided to respond to it." The invective has only got sharper as he donned saffron robes, calling Mamata's nephew Abhishek Banerjee a '*talpatar shepai*' (straw soldier) with a "troop of hoodlums", setting up a potential direct fight in Diamond Harbour. As for the TMC regime, he calls it a '*Chourya Samrajya*' (empire of thieves). Mamata, handed the sort of rhetorical battle she likes, has been no less combative, saying, "Your face has been unmasked. All your judgements are under question." Whichever way it goes, it promises to be an epic within an epic.

Learn in mother tongue: Primers in non-scheduled languages launched

KAVITA BAJELI-DATT @ New Delhi

STUDENTS will now get to learn in their mother tongues as the education ministry on Saturday launched 52 primers in non-scheduled Indian languages.

Launching various initiatives in school and teacher education, Education Minister **Dharmendra Pradhan** said the primers or short textbooks, including in tribal languages, in non-scheduled Indian languages are for Early Childhood Care and Education.

"The 52 primers in Indian languages have paved the way for the beginning of a new civilisational renaissance. These initiatives will create a seamless and futuristic learning landscape, promote learning in Indian languages, realise the vision of National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and holistically transform school education," the minister said.

"It will initiate an inspirational journey for young minds, paving the way for deeper understanding, lifelong learning, more familiarity and roots in indigenous culture, and greater success in academics."

The primers of 52 Indian languages of 17 states have been prepared by the Central Institute of Indian Languages in Mysuru, in collaboration with the National Council for Educational Research and Training.

The non-scheduled languages refer to all other languages that are spoken in India but have not been given official recognition. The initiative is in line with the government's efforts to promote Indian languages in education at all levels in line with the NEP 2020.

"Language is power and learning in mother tongue is transformational," Pradhan said. Declaring it a landmark day in taking a step ahead towards becoming Viksit Bharat by 2047, he said, "This is a pivotal stride towards realising an inclusive, innovative, and equitable education system. Empowering both teachers and learners at the grassroots level, these have great potential to deliver quality education for all."

The minister also launched the District Institutes of Education and Training, which will be developed into centres of excellence. Apart from that, he launched National Professional Standard for Teachers, National Mission for Mentoring, and integration of National Vidya Samiksha Kendra with their state counterparts.

Pradhan said the Centre is working on providing 200 channels on OTT platforms as part of the PM e-Vidya initiative.

School Education secretary Sanjay Kumar highlighted the recommendation of NEP 2020 to take GER in the secondary level to 100 per cent by 2030 and how the department is committed to fulfilling that.

He also said the new textbooks for Classes 3-12, some of which have already been developed. The remaining ones will also be brought out soon.

"Financial assistance will be provided to states and Union Territories for the physical upgradation of all District Institutes of Education and Training," he said.

CIIL Mysuru & NCERT prepared the primers

Non-scheduled languages refer to all the languages that are spoken in India but have not been given official recognition. The primers for the 52 non-scheduled languages of 17 states have been prepared by the Central Institute of Indian Languages in Mysuru, in collaboration with the National Council for Educational Research and Training.

States & UTs told to take action against 3 banned J&K-based terror outfits

MUKESH RANJAN @ New Delhi

THE Government of India has authorised all the states and Union Territories (UTs) to take appropriate lawful actions against three banned Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) based terrorist organisations and their functionaries under provisions of the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA), officials said on Saturday.

The organisations, which have been recently declared unlawful under the UAPA provisions, include the Muslim Conference Jammu and Kashmir (Sumji faction), Muslim Conference Jammu and Kashmir (Bhat faction) and Jamaat-e-Islami, Jammu and Kashmir.

"In three identical notifications, the Union Ministry of Home Affairs has said that the Central government directs that all powers exercisable by it under Section 7 and Section 8 of the anti-terror Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967, shall be exercised by state governments and Union Territory administrations in relation to the three unlawful associations," the officials said.

On February 27, the home ministry extended the ban on Jamaat-e-Islami, Jammu and Kashmir, for five years for continuing activities against the security, integrity and sovereignty of the nation.

A day later, it announced that the Muslim Conference Jammu and Kashmir (Sumji faction) and the Muslim Conference Jammu and Kashmir (Bhat faction) were also declared as banned groups for their anti-India and pro-Pakistan propaganda.

The two groups, which are the constituents of Mirwaiz Umar Farooq's All-Parties Hurriyat Conference, have not been active for many years. The Centre's move may further erode the militants ranks and help other parties to contest elections in a fearless manner.

Unlawful associations

The Union Ministry of Home Affairs had, on February 27, extended the ban on Jamaat-e-Islami Jammu and Kashmir for five years for continuing activities against the security, integrity and sovereignty of the nation. A day later, it announced Muslim Conference Jammu and Kashmir (Sumji faction) and Muslim Conference Jammu and Kashmir (Bhat faction) as banned groups. In three identical notifications recently, the ministry asked states and UTs to take action against these unlawful associations.

Early hearing sought on plea against Bofors order

SUCHITRA KALYAN MOHANTY
@ New Delhi

A LAWYER who fought the ₹64 crore Bofors pay-off case in various courts has moved the Supreme Court seeking an early hearing into his plea challenging the Delhi High Court's 2005 verdict that quashed all charges, including those against businessmen Hinduja brothers.

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) had moved the Supreme Court in 2018, challenging the High Court verdict, which surprised all, as it had approached the top court after a gap of 13 years.

After 2018, the apex court has not conducted any fruitful hearing in the case. According to the Supreme Court registry and staff, the Bofors matter would likely come up for hearing in the top court, within a week or after the Holi vacation, after March 30.

The AB Bofors company, popularly known as Bofors, had in 1986 entered into an agreement with the Indian government for supplying 400 units of 155 mm Howitzer guns to the Indian Army. Later, it came to the limelight that the company had paid a bribe of ₹64 crore to top Indian politicians and defence officers for clinching the deal.

The application, filed by Advocate Ajay Agrawal, said that the apex court had on November 2, 2018, dismissed the CBI plea against the Delhi High Court verdict. It said the probe agency can raise all these grounds in the appeal filed by him against the judgment.

Agrawal said he had filed the petition in 2018 in the top court against the Delhi High Court verdict in 2005 itself.

Indian and Italian businessmen SP Hinduja, Ottavio Quattrocchi and Win Chaddha — all Bofors pay-off accused — have already died.

The CBI had in 1990 registered the FIR for the alleged offences under various Sections, including criminal conspiracy, cheating and forgery under the IPC and other sections of the Prevention of Corruption Act against Martin Ardbo, the then president of AB Bofors, Chadda and Hinduja brothers.

The CBI claimed that certain public servants and private persons in India and abroad had allegedly entered into a criminal conspiracy between 1982 and 1987 in pursuance of which the offences of bribery, corruption, cheating and forgery were committed.

It also filed a supplementary charge sheet against the Hinduja brothers on October 9, 2000.

ALSO IN TOP COURT

WB BJP youth wing leader seeks compensation for false implication in narcotic drugs case

BJP youth leader from West Bengal, Pamela Goswami, has moved Supreme Court, asking it to direct the West Bengal government to grant compensation for filing a false Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) case against her. The top court had recently rejected the state government's appeal against her discharge in the case pertaining to alleged possession of cocaine. Goswami's plea filed in the Supreme Court stated that she has been victim of a criminal conspiracy. "I am seeking compensation for my illegal custody, wrongful confinement and malicious prosecution in the Drugs case. The case has caused grave injustices to me," the plea said.

U'khand drags feet on taking action against Ramdev's Patanjali Ayurved

KAVITA BAJELI-DATT @ New Delhi

THE Uttarakhand licensing authorities are still delaying action against yoga guru **Ramdev**'s Patanjali Ayurved for repeated violations of an Act that deals with misleading advertisements of Ayush products. This is despite directions from the Prime Minister's Office and lambasting from the Supreme Court.

The Ayurveda and Unani Services Licensing Authority of Uttarakhand, in its reply to a Right to Information (RTI) application filed by Kerala-based ophthalmologist Dr K V Babu, said the state licensing authority had directed the Haridwar drug inspector to conduct an inspection and take action. The RTI reply came on March 4.

However, this was not the first time that the Uttarakhand State Licensing Authorities gave this answer to Dr Babu, who has been fighting against Patanjali's misleading advertisements of its drugs for diabetes, obesity, thyroid, and heart diseases.

The Uttarakhand SLA has given the same answer on September 3, 2022, February 2, 2023, and now on February 12, 2024.

"As per the records, a similar direction was given on the same issue since 2022. But no action has been taken until now. This seems to be a ploy used as a delaying tactic to drag the issue," Dr Babu told this paper.

"They have been sitting on the communication from the Ayush Ministry and my complaints for the past two years," he said.

The RTI activist had written to the Prime Minister's Office on January 15 regarding repeated infringements of the Drugs and Magic Remedies (Objectionable Advertisements) Act, 1954 by Patanjali Ayurved after he failed to get any response and appropriate action against the company from either the Drugs Controller General of India, under the Union Health Ministry, Ayush Ministry, and the Uttarakhand SLA.

The PMO had then directed the Ayush ministry on January 24 for appropriate action.

LIQUOR SEIZED
The state excise department seized country-made liquor worth Rs 26.94 lakh and arrested two persons in Maharashtra's Thane district, an official said on Saturday. 48,400 bottles packed in cartons recovered.

2 FORCED INTO BONDED LABOUR SAVED FROM BRICK KILN IN GUJARAT

Ahmedabad	23	21	Mumbai	29	22
Bhopal	26	12	Panaji	33	22
Jaipur	22	12	Patna	30	20
Amritsar	21	05	Lucknow	25	15
Chennai	31	25	Port Blair	30	26
Kolkata	32	24	Imphal	26	12
Srinagar	04	-03	Chandigarh	20	09

■ Setback to Cong as migration continues in MP and Gujarat ■ MahaYuti led by BJP faces Maha hiccups ■ BJP's 1st list creates stir in UP

Former Union minister, many others quit Congress in MP

ANURAAG SINGH @ Bhopal

OPPOSITION Congress continues to see exodus of key leaders from its ranks to the ruling BJP in Madhya Pradesh. The latest development happened on Saturday morning, when a host of Congress leaders led by ex-union minister and former state Congress chief Suresh Pachouri joined the BJP at the state BJP HQ in Bhopal.

Besides, Pachouri, the other Congress leaders who joined the BJP, included three times former MP from Dhar-ST Lok Sabha seat Gajendra Singh Rajukhedi, three ex-MLAs Sanjay Shukla, Vishal Patel (both from Indore) and Arjun Paliya (who won from Narmadapuram district's Pipariya-SC seat as SP candidate in 2003 assembly polls), besides Dr Alok Chansoria (who was runners up from Jabalpur Lok Sabha seat in the 1998 polls) and former Bhopal district Congress chief Kailash Mishra.

Among these leaders, ex-MP Gajendra Singh Rajukhedi and former Indore-1 MLA Sanjay Shukla returned to the BJP fold. While Shukla hails from an old BJP family, Rajukhedi who had won the Dhar-ST LS seat for the Congress in 1998, 1999 and 2009, had prior to it as BJP candidate done the giant killing act by defeating ex-MP deputy CM Shivbhanu Solanki from Manwar assembly seat in 1990 assembly elections.

During Gujarat yatra, Rahul says worried over attrition

State leaders reprimanded for not addressing people's concerns

DILIP SINGH KSHATRIYA @ Ahmedabad

THE 'Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra' of Rahul Gandhi extended into Gujarat's Chhota Udepur district on the third day on Saturday. While the Congress leader was engaged in discussions with party MLAs, a significant migration from the party began. Former six-time Congress MLA Niranjan Patel from Petlad in Anand district joined the BJP in the presence of state BJP chief CR Patil. In Siddapur of Patan district, local Congress leaders and workers switched sides to the BJP in a ceremony attended by BJP MP Bharat Singh Dabhi and state minister Balwant Singh.

Besides, a wave of resignations hit the Congress in Porbandar with district unit chief Ram Odedara, and most district city committee members stepping down to announce their allegiance to the BJP.

During today's leg of the yatra, Rahul called a meeting to address the recent wave of MLAs resigning from the Congress, engaging in individual discussions with the remaining Congress MLAs.

Expressing concern over the dwindling MLA count, a senior Congress leader said, "In Rahul Gandhi's gathering with MLAs in Bodeli, the topic of the 2022 Gujarat assembly elections defeat was broached. Some MLAs attributed the Congress' loss to anti-BJP votes being redirected to AAP. The discussion also delved into the party's inability to counter the AAP's assurances."

A party source said during the session, Rahul reprimanded party officials for inadequately addressing the public's concerns. He directed the MLAs to start preparations for the Lok Sabha elections. He also commended the MLAs for their steadfastness in not defecting to the Opposition camp. "The issue of Congress leaders' defection was also discussed," said the source.

However, hours after Rahul's meeting with Congress MLAs, former party MLA Niranjan Patel, who served six terms representing the Petlad constituency in central Gujarat's Anand district, officially aligned himself with the BJP.

"My decision to join the BJP is not motivated by monetary gain, personal ambition, or power. I have not placed any demands upon the BJP; my allegiance is purely based on ideology."

Niranjan resigned from the Congress after being excluded in the 2022 Assembly elections. Aged 76 years, Niranjan served as the MLA for Petlad continuously since 1990, except for the 2002 polls.

Rahul Gandhi with supporters in Dahod on Friday | PTI

> **In Rahul Gandhi's meet with MLAs in Bodeli, the topic of 2022 Gujarat assembly polls defeat was broached. Some MLAs attributed the Congress' loss to anti-BJP votes being redirected to AAP. It was also party's inability to counter AAP's assurances** — Senior Cong leader

Shinde, Ajit tread tightrope walk amid BJP's hard bargain

SUDHIR SURYAWANSHI @ Mumbai

MAHARASHTRA Chief Minister Eknath Shinde and Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar had a two-and-a-half-hour meeting with Union Minister Amit Shah in Delhi late Friday night. However, the BJP refused to concede a single additional seat to alliance partners for the upcoming Lok Sabha elections.

Highly placed sources revealed that CM Eknath Shinde first met Union Minister Amit Shah, followed by DCM Ajit Pawar in Delhi. However, the deadlock over Lok Sabha seat sharing persists between these alliance partners.

Commenting on their meeting with BJP leadership, Maharashtra CM Eknath Shinde stated that discussions on seat sharing are ongoing and amicable resolution is expected soon.

"BJP has offered nine seats to Shiv Sena (Shinde) and four seats to Ajit Pawar-led NCP, contrary to their demand for 18 and nine Lok Sabha seats respectively. BJP leadership informed both Shinde and Ajit Pawar that conceding more seats to them would risk losing those seats.

Each seat holds significant importance in this Lok Sabha election, as indicated by multiple internal survey reports of the BJP. The alliance partners were urged not to insist on additional seats if they genuinely wish to see Narendra Modi re-elected as Prime Minister for the third time," said the source requesting anonymity.

The late-night meeting between Shah, Shinde, and Pawar concluded early Saturday morning. Despite extensive negotiations, the BJP refused to give up any Lok Sabha seat.

The alliance partners proposed fielding strong candidates from their parties under the BJP symbol on a few seats to save face and maintain unity. The BJP promised to consider the suggestion and give feedback, according to a confidential source.A senior NCP leader expressed concern, stating that accepting four Lok Sabha seats would effectively end their political influence in the state.

'To maintain unity'

The alliance partners proposed fielding strong candidates from their parties under the BJP symbol to save face and maintain unity. The BJP promised to consider the suggestion, according to a source. A senior NCP leader said accepting four Lok Sabha seats would effectively end their political influence

JAIPUR DIARY

RAJESH ASNANI
Our correspondent in Jaipur
rajesh.asnani@newindianexpress.com

Buzz over Bhajan Lal cabinet expansion soon

Rajasthan is abuzz with speculation over an impending cabinet expansion in CM Bhajan Lal Sharma's government. A recent meeting between the CM and Governor Kalraj Mishra has intensified discussions, hinting at a BJP strategy to balance caste and regional equations ahead of LS polls. The central leadership's approval is awaited for the anticipated inclusion of 3 to 4 ministers. Likely contenders include Jaswant Yadav, Baba Balaknath, , Gurveer Barad , Srichand Kriplani, Kalicharan Saraf and Deepti Maheshwari. Among these Kriplani and Saraf are known Vasundhara Raje supporters .The reshuffle aims to fill six vacant positions, and maintain balance in representation.

Rajasthan Tourism Dept exhibits pavilion in Berlin

The Rajasthan Tourism Department garnered significant attention in Germany due to its pavilion at ITB Berlin. Inaugurated by India's Ambassador to Germany, P Harish and Joint Secretary M R Cinieream of the Ministry of Tourism, the pavilion was adorned with splendor. Principal Secretary Gayatri Rathore and Director Dr Rashmi Sharma from the tourism department were present at the event too. A scheduled road show and presentation was also organized which is targeting tour operators and media. Rathore expressed optimism that these efforts would boost tourism, particularly attracting more German tourists to explore Rajasthan.

BJP expects mass migration from Cong

As the Lok Sabha elections approach, the BJP is poised to deal a significant blow to the Congress, with a wave of former Congress Ministers and MLAs expected to join their ranks. Figures like Lalchand Kataria, Rajendra Yadav, Richpal Mirdha, Vijaypal Mirdha, Khiladilal Bairwa, Alok Beniwal, and Rampal Sharma, among others, are set to switch allegiance to the BJP. The inclusion of Congress MLA Mahendra Jeet Malviya and granting him a Lok Sabha ticket from Banswara underscores the party's growing influence. Earlier, Jyoti Mirdha had also joined BJP. However, this influx has stirred restlessness among BJP workers, raising concerns about the party looking lot like Congress now.

Murmurs of dissent in UP BJP over ticket distribution

NAMITA BAJPAI @ Lucknow

VOICES of dissent emanate from various quarters in Uttar Pradesh, especially in some pockets where the BJP has repeated the sitting MPs, besides the one where Saket Mishra has been introduced for the upcoming Lok Sabha elections.

The BJP has announced its first list of 195 candidates, of which 51 are meant for UP. Of these, while the party reposed faith in 44 sitting MPs, it has given tickets to three candidates in Sambhal, Amroha and Lalganj — who had lost the election in 2019. Three new faces — Saket Mishra from Shravasti, Ritesh Pandey (BSP turncoat) from Ambedkarnagar and Kripa Shankar Singh from Jaunpur — have also been introduced in battleground UP.

However, despite party leadership's appeal for a united face with a robust campaign to ensure victory, the sulking cadres have been unable to suppress their sentiments against the declared candidate. The dissenting voices emerged in Shravasti, where the BJP has fielded Saket Mishra, MLC and an investment banker. He is the son of retired IAS officer Nripendra Mishra, chairman of the Ram Temple Construction Committee.

The BJP had lost Shravasti in 2019 to the BSP. Recently, some local BJP workers thronged the party office in Shravasti, raising slogans against Mishra. Mishra took out an impressive roadshow, leading a convoy of 200 vehicles in an open four-wheeler, covering three assembly segments.

"Sakateji has been active here for the last five years. His maternal grandfather Badlu Ram Shukla has been an MP from adjoining Bahraich," says a local leader. In Fatehpur Sikri, the twin constituency of Agra, Rajkumar Chahar, a Jat OBC leader and sitting MP, has been repeated.

44 sitting MPs

BJP has announced 51 names for Uttar Pradesh. Of these, the party reposed faith in 44 sitting MPs, it has given tickets to 3 candidates in Sambhal, Amroha and Lalganj — who had lost in 2019. Three new faces — Saket Mishra, Ritesh Pandey and Kripa Shankar Singh — have also been introduced in battleground UP

SHAH IN PATNA

Amit Shah targets Sonia Gandhi and Lalu Prasad on dynastic politics on Saturday | PTI

₹55,600 cr
WORTH PROJECTS FOR MANIPUR, MEGHALAYA, NAGALAND, SIKKIM, TRIPURA AND ARUNACHAL PRADESH
PM's ₹73,000 crore BONANZA FOR NE
₹8,534 cr
worth projects in Tripura
₹4,500 cr
worth infrastructure projects in northern West Bengal
₹17,500 cr
worth projects were designated for Assam
First oil mill under 'Mission Palm Oil', special campaign for Northeast

Sarfaraz Ahmad who quit for Soren's wife gets RS ticket

MUKESH RANJAN @ Ranchi

JMM has named Sarfaraz Ahmad's name for Rajya Sabha polls. Ahmad is the ex-MLA from Gandey Assembly Constituency, who resigned from the Assembly membership on December 31 apprently paving way for former Chief Minister Hemant Soren's wife Kalpana Soren to contest election from the seat.

Meanwhile, Central Election Committee has nominated State BJP General Secretary Dr Pradeep Verma as party's candidate for the upcoming Rajya Sabha polls scheduled on March 21 in the state.

According to the notification issued by BJP National General Secretary cum headquarter in-charge Arun Singh, the party Central Election Commission has approved Dr Pradeep Verma's name for the Rajya Sabha elections 2024 in Jharkhand. In the seat distribution in Congress-Jharkhand Mukti Morcha-RJD alliance in the 2019 Jharkhand Assembly elections, the Gandey Assembly seat went to JMM.

Sarfaraz Ahmad was in Congress, but later, he joined the JMM, which made him its candidate from Gandey.

Sarfaraz has been in politics for the last 50 years and has served in various positions in the Congress. With the announcements of two names it has almost become final that these two candidates will win the elections.

The 81-member Jharkhand Assembly, the Congress-JMM-RJD alliance has 47 MLAs, while the NDA has support of at least 31 legislators.

BJP candidate

Former MLA Sarfaraz Ahmad's name has been proposed by JMM. Meanwhile, BJP has nominated Pradeep Verma as the party's candidate for the elections scheduled on March 21.

All-weather Sela Tunnel to facilitate smooth troops movement inaugurated

PRASANTA MAZUMDAR @ Guwahati

THE Sela Tunnel in Arunachal Pradesh, which Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated on Saturday, will ensure all-weather connectivity to Tawang and forward areas, and facilitate smoother movement of troops.

Built by the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) under Project Vartak, the Rs 825 crore strategic project is a component of the Trans-Arunachal Highway system and the longest two-lane tunnel in the world at 13,000 feet. The tunnel will bypass the treacherous Sela Pass. The Balipara-Charduar-Tawang Road, on which the tunnel has been constructed, is an important axis connecting Tawang region and provides connectivity to the hinterland upto Tezpur.

The road had various bottlenecks but the BRO addressed them by constructing Sela and Nechiphu Tunnels and Bomdila Bypass.

The 500-metre-long Nechiphu Tunnel was inaugurated and dedicated to the nation on September 12 last year by defence minister Rajnath Singh.

The foundation stone for Sela Tunnel was laid by Modi on February 9, 2019 and the construction commenced on April 1 the same year. The first blast took place on October 31 that year.

The tunnel has been completed in five years overcoming challenges of difficult terrain and adverse weather conditions. The Sela Tunnel system consists of two tunnels measuring 1,003 metres and 1,595 metres with 8.6 km and link roads. The second tunnel has an escape tube adjacent to the main tunnel as per international norms.

State of affairs: 5 U'khand MPs fail to spend 64% of MPLAD funds, says RTI

NARENDRA SETHI @ Dehradun

AS the term of the 17th Lok Sabha nears its completion, five Bhartiya Janata Party MPs from Uttarakhand have failed to utilise 64 per cent of the funds allocated to them for constituency development, shows data received through an application filed under the Right to Information ACT.

The RTI reply revealed that ₹54.49 crore remains unutilised out of the total allocation of ₹85 crore under the Member of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme (MPLAD) to the representatives of Tehri, Pauri, Nainital, Almora, and Haridwar constituencies.

In response to advocate Nadeem-udeen's RTI query, the public information officer of the Uttarakhand rural development commissioner, Hemanti Gunjial, shared the data.

"As of December 2023, the state's five MPs had utilised only ₹30.51 crore out of the allocated MPLAD fund of ₹85 crore," said the reply.

"The current five MPs in Uttarakhand are eligible to receive a total of ₹85 crore in MPLAD fund. However, due to failure to submit utilisation certificates in respect of expenditure of previous installments, audit reports, etc., ₹22.02 crore has not been released till December 31, 2023," Nadeem-udeen said.

"While interest amounting to ₹3.42 crore has been added to the ₹62.98 crore received from the Centre, making a total of ₹66.4 crore in MPLAD funds, as of December 2023. A sum of ₹32.47 crore has not been spent", said Nadeem-udeen.

WHAT THE RTI REPLY SAYS
₹85 CR allocated to five BJP MPs under Member of Parliament Local Area DEVELOPMENT SCHEME
₹54.49 CR remains unutilised till December 31, 2023
The MPs represent Tehri, Pauri, Nainital, Almora, and Haridwar constituencies
As of December 31, only Haridwar MP Ramesh Pokhriyal and Pauri MP Tirath Singh Rawat have received the full ₹17 CR
Others have not got full amount due to failure to submit utilisation certificates

Sukhu's trouble mounts as rebels reach U'khand

HARPREET BAJWA @ Chandigarh

SIX Congress MLAs from Himachal Pradesh and three independent legislators, who voted for the BJP in the recent Rajya Sabha elections, have been shifted to a resort at Rishikesh in Uttarakhand from Panchkula in Haryana, a development that shows that crisis still looms over the Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu-led government.

Sources familiar with the development said the nine legislators flew from Chandigarh in a private plane to Dehradun from where they left for Rishikesh. "These lawmakers are likely to stay at the resort in Rishikesh until the Supreme Court hears their plea as they have challenged the speaker's decision of disqualification,'' said a source, adding a team of cosp have been deployed to provide security to the MLAs.

Addressing a public gathering in Kangra on Friday, Chief Minister Sukhu said, "These MLAs must have been shifted to unknown place as there was a lot of pressure on them from their family members to return home. These MLAs must be going through tough times as they would have realized by now that they have made a mistake. When they will eventually come out, they will have this regret of having tried to topple the government and weakening democracy," he said.

When asked if any lawmakers were in touch with him, Sukhu said, "I am not in touch with any of these MLAs.'' Uttarakhand Congress spokesperson Garima Mahara Dasoni said, "By bringing the rebel MLAs who were disqualified from the legislative assembly to Uttarakhand, the BJP has committed a 'constitutional sin'."

6 persons, including four police officers, were killed by armed men accused of belonging to separatist group in Nigeria's Ebonyi state on Saturday

GLOBAL WEATHER

LR: Light Rain • WI: Windy • HR: Heavy Rain • SN: Snow • TDS: Thundershower • LC: Light Cloud • SNY: Sunny

Beijing	13	-1	SNY	Los Angeles	21	11	SNY
Colombo	31	23	SNY	Melbourne	38	21	SNY
Dhaka	31	15	SNY	Moscow	-3	-8	LC
Dubai	26	16	WI	New York	11	3	LR
Houston	21	12	SNY	Singapore	31	24	TDS
Istanbul	12	5	SNY	Toronto	3	0	SN
London	11	7	LR	Washington	9	3	SNY

AID BOAT TO SET SAIL AS GAZA FIGHTING RAGES BEFORE RAMADAN

Boat laden with 200 tonnes of basic foodstuffs, rice and flour, cans of tuna; Israel welcomes Cypriot sea corridor initiative

GAZA STRIP

A BOAT laden with food for Palestinians in war-ravaged Gaza was "ready" to set sail from Cyprus, an NGO said Saturday, as fighting raged between Israeli troops and the Hamas ahead of Ramadan.

The sea route aims to counter aid access restrictions, which humanitarians and foreign governments have blamed on Israel, more than five months into the war which has left Gaza's 2.4 million people struggling to survive.

The United Nations has repeatedly warned of looming famine, particularly in the Palestinian territory's north where no overland border crossings are open.

Spanish charity Open Arms said its boat, which docked three weeks ago in Cyprus's Larnaca port, "will be ready" to embark later on Saturday but awaits final authorisation.

It would be the first shipment along a maritime corridor from Cyprus – the closest European Union country to Gaza – that the EU Commission hopes will open on Sunday.

Open Arms spokeswoman Laura Lanuza said that Israeli authorities, which have welcomed the Cypriot sea corridor initiative, were inspecting the cargo of "200 tonnes of basic foodstuffs, rice and flour, cans of tuna".

US charity World Central Kitchen, which has partnered with Open Arms, has teams in the besieged Gaza Strip who were "constructing a dock" to unload the shipment, Lanuza said.

With ground access limited, countries have also turned to airdropping aid, although a parachute malfunction turned one delivery on Friday deadly.

There are no functioning ports in Gaza and officials did not say where the initial shipments would go, whether they would be subject to inspection by Israel, or who would distribute aid.

The Pentagon said on Friday that a US plan to establish a "temporary offshore maritime pier" in Gaza would take up to 60 days and would likely involve more than 1,000 American personnel.

Israel, which withdrew from Gaza in 2005 but has maintained control over its airspace and territorial waters, said it "welcomes" the planned maritime corridor.

AFP

Palestinian children sit in front of wall bearing Ramadan theme drawings in Gaza City as Muslim worshippers prepare to welcome the holy fasting month of Ramadan which begins next week | AFP

WAR WATCH

ISRAEL-GAZA: DAY 153

GAZA TOLL SO FAR

30,960

- Turkish President Recep Recep Tayyip Erdogan said on Saturday Ankara "firmly backs" Palestinian militant group Hamas. "No-one can make us qualify Hamas as a terrorist organisation," he said in a speech in Istanbul. "Turkey is a country that speaks openly with Hamas leaders and firmly backs them."
- The war in Gaza has ruptured any sense of a shared humanity, the head of the International Committee of the Red Cross said on Saturday. ICRC head Mirjana Spoljaric called for an urgent ceasefire in Gaza, saying Israel and Hamas must respect international law and protect civilians caught up in their conflict.

Asif Ali Zardari elected Pak's 14th president

ISLAMABAD/LAHORE

PAKISTAN Peoples Party co-chairperson Asif Ali Zardari was elected as Pakistan's 14th President on Saturday, becoming the head of state for a second time. Zardari, 68, was the joint candidate of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) and the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) while his rival Mahmood Khan Achakzai, 75, was the candidate of the Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC).

He received 255 votes while his opponent got 119 votes in the National Assembly and the Senate. The new president was elected by the electoral college of the newly elected members of the National Assembly and the four provincial assemblies, as per the provisions of the Constitution.

A businessman-turned-politician, Zardari is the husband of slain Pakistan prime minister Benazir Bhutto. Zardari would replace the incumbent Dr Arif Alvi. Zardari, who served as the president from 2008 to 2013, will also be the first civilian to be elected for the second time as president. He is expected to be sworn in on Sunday. Jailed former prime minister Imran Khan's party called Saturday's election "unconstitutional and unacceptable" and urged the people to hold peaceful protests across the country against poll robbery on Sunday. *PTI*

Violence battering Haiti causing food and water shortages

PORT AU PRINCE

ROTTING fruit, withered vegetables, empty water jugs and spent gas canisters now stock the stores and stands that serve Haiti's poor ' a consequence of the unrelenting gang attacks that have paralysed the country for more than a week and left it with dwindling supplies of basic goods. The terrifying violence as anti-government gangs battle police in the streets has crippled the fragile economy and made it extremely difficult for many of the country's most vulnerable to feed themselves.

The main port in the capital, Port-au-Prince, closed down, stranding scores of containers full of food and medical supplies at a time when UN officials say half the country's more than 11 million inhabitants don't have enough to eat, and 1.4 million are starving. Grocery stores in upscale parts of the capital remain stocked, but their goods are out of reach to most in a country where most people earn less than $2 a day.

Scores of people have been killed and more than 15,000 have been forced from their homes since coordinated gang attacks began on February 29 while Prime Minister Ariel Henry was in Kenya to push for the UN-backed deployment of a police force from the East African country to fight gangs in Haiti. A Kenyan court, however, ruled in January that such a deployment would be unconstitutional.

Meanwhile, Haitian officials extended a state of emergency and nightly curfew on Thursday as gangs continued to attack key state institutions. *AP*

Haitians cross the border to work in the binational market in Dajabon, Dominican Republic | AFP

ASIA MATTERS

Two huge drug hauls made in Mae Hong Son

About 1.2 million speed pills and 35kg of crystal methamphetamine was found hidden in six fertiliser sacks in a forested area along the Thai-Myanmar border in Mae Hong Son, following an earlier seizure of an even bigger drug haul nearby. Local officials, border patrol and local police were dispatched to border areas on Friday night following intelligence reports that a drug gang was preparing to smuggle drugs via natural crossing in Pai Song-ngae village for transport to Chiang Mai, said Anek Panthayom, Pai district chief. The drugs were handed over to the Pai police station.

'Will provide possible help to those in gaza'

Singapore's Home Affairs and Law Minister K Shanmugam said on Saturday that his country would do whatever best possible to extend help to those affected in Gaza amidst the ongoing Israel-Hamas war. Non-profit group Humanity Matters organised an event to pack supplies for children in Gaza estimated to cost $75,000. PTI

PUBLIC NOTICE

Public are informed that **Katta Jagadish**, Residing at No.9, 6th 'A' Cross, Sadashivanagar, Bengaluru-560 080, hereby informs that, the Registered Sale Deed in the name of Katta Jagadish has been lost, Registered Sale Deeds document no. No.1547/2007, 1554/2007, 1408/2002, 38/2007, 1302/2002, 2325/2005, 1347/2006, 1781/2004, 1348/2008 registered at Shankarankovil Sub-registrar Office, Tenkasi District, Tamil Nadu. in the name of Katta Jagadish, the above mentioned original sale deed documents have been lost on 04-03-2024, I have lodged a police complaint with reference to the last report No.0959889/2024 at Police Unit, Bengaluru City Police Station. Any person/s in possession of the aforesaid document may return the same to me or anyone having any sort of claim over the said property may lodge their objections in writing **within 7 days** from this day to the undersigned.

KATTA JAGADISH
No.9, 6th 'A' Cross, Sadashivanagar, Bengaluru-560 080 Ph:9980777777/9964861856
Date: 09-03-2024, Place: Bengaluru

PUBLIC NOTICE

Public are informed that my client **Mrs.Preethi S.N.**, W/o. Mr.Manjunath S., Aged about 36 Years, Residing at No.115, Coles Road, Frazer Town, Bangalore – 560005, hereby informs that she is intent to purchase the below Schedule Property which belonging to the owner i.e. Legal heirs of Late M.Syed Umer viz., (wife) Hajira Tabbasum and children viz., Syeda Rabia & Syeda Khathija Arshiya, all are Residing at 711, 25th Main Road, 6th Phase, J.P.Nagar, Bangalore and the same was acquired by both Mr.M.Syed Umer and his wife Hajira Tabbasum through Sale Deed dated 30.10.2004, Document No.28510/2004-05, registered in the office of Sub-Registrar, Kengeri Bangalore. And further stating that the said Client is wishes to purchase the Schedule Property from the above said Owner and also intent to have loan /credit facility from Bank, Bangalore, in case any party has any claim towards the said relevant property, the same should be lodged with the intending party and also with the Bank, within 7 days from publication of this Notice.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY

All that piece and parcel of the immovable house property bearing No.711 situated at 25th Main Road, 6th Phase, J.P.Nagar, Bangalore Corporation Ward No.57, PID No.57-216-711, BBMP Ward No.178, Sarakki, Bangalore measuring East to West 40 Feet and North to South 30 Feet in all measuring 1200 Sq.Ft. consisting of ground and first floor building constructed thereon and bounded on:
East by : Site bearing No.720; **West by** : Road;
North by : Site bearing No.710;
South by : Site bearing No.712.

T.A. HARISH B.A.L., LL.B.
Advocate/Legal Advisor
#15/7, 3rd Cross, Sampige Road, Malleshwaram, Bangalore – 560003. Mob: 9535506768
E-Mail:taharish80@gmail.com

PUBLIC NOTICE

Public are hereby informed that My Client Mr. Mahiuddin Khan C/o. Abdul Hafiz, R/a. No. No. 36, 37th Cross, 19th Main, 1st Stage, 5th Block, HBR Layout, Bangalore North, Bengaluru-560043 intends to Purchase and Mortgage the Schedule Property more particularly described in the Schedule hereunder and reffered as Schedule Property from the Present Owners Mrs. Beena Kumari Mishra @ Beena Kumar Bharadwaj W/o. Mr.Anil Kumar Bharadwaj who is represented as absolute Owner of the Schedule Property to my Client.

Notice is hereby given to the General Public that if any persons, entity, company, firm, institution has or claims any right, title, interest, pending Litigation, tenancy, mortgage, charge, lien or demand or any other interest of whatsoever nature in or upon the Schedule Property or any part thereof, the same may be brought to the notice of the undersigned in writing together with all details and documents in support of such claim **within 07 (Seven) days** from the date of this Notice, failing which it shall be deemed that the aforesaid owners has a clear and marketable title to the schedule Property and that none else has any right, title, interest or claim whatsoever in respect of the Schedule Property and my client would be at liberty to proceed to purchase the schedule Proeprty. Any Claims received after the expiry of the period mentioned above shall neither be entertained nor be binding on my client.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY:

All the part of the immovable property bearing House List No.10 and 11, New BBMP Khatha No.534/10.11, Old Khatha No.534, Assessment No.65/6, Situated at Thanisandra Village, Krishnarajapuram Hobli, earlier Bangalore South Taluk, Presently Bangalore East Taluk, Presently comes under the Jurisdiction of Bruhat Bangalore Mahanagara Palike ward No. 06-Thanisandra, Bangalore, measuring East to West: 60 feet and North to South: 40 feet, in all measuring 2400 Square feet, along with 4 Square A.C. Sheet Roofed house, with red oxide flooring, Jungle wood doors and windows with all civic amenities, and bounded on;

East by : Private Property; **West by :** Road;
North by : Private Property; **South by :** Road;

Mohan Ram B R, Advocate
#47/1, 1st Floor, Austin Plaza, Austin Town, Bengaluru- 560079. Contact No. 8722671564
Bengaluru, Date : 09.03.2024

PUBLIC NOTICE (LOSS OF DOCUMENT)

My client **Mr. MUSHEER AHMED,** Aged about 37 years, S/o.Mr.Mohammed Maqbool Ahmed, Residing at # 9, 10th "A" Cross, Kanakanagar, R.T.Nagar Post, Bangalore-560 032, who was the custodian of the following original documents in respect of Residential Vacant Site Bearing **No.52/21,** Khata No.33, New Khata No.252/52/21, Being Portion of Assessment No.21/1, situated at **Honniganahatti Village, Taverekere Hobli, Bangalore South Taluk, Bangalore,** and the said property originally belongs to Mrs.Hafsa Ashrafi, W/o.Mr. Mohammed Nasiruddin, and D/o.Mr.Noor Mohammed Ajmal, and who had acquired the same by way of a Registered Deed of Sale vide dated:13-12-2023 which is Registered as Document No.RRN-1-09237-2023-24 of Book-I, stored in Central Server, by the Sub-Registrar, Rajarajeshwari Nagar, Bangalore.
a) Dated:17-06-1995 Registered on 17-11-1995 Registered as Document No.3520 of 1995-96 at Pages 127 to 131 in Volume No.1303 of Book-I, by the Sub-Registrar, Kengeri, Bangalore.
b) Previous link documents viz. GPA dated:15-07-1994 as well as the earlier title deed viz. Registered WILL dated:01-05-1952
c) Original Sale Deed Dated:13-12-2023 which is Registered as Document No.RRN-1-09237-2023-24 of Book-I, stored in Central Server, by the Sub-Registrar, Rajarajeshwari Nagar, Bangalore.
That the aforesaid original documents were available with my client he has lost and misplaced while in transit.
That the finder if any may please contact the undersigned who will be suitably rewarded for the same.

ABDUL LATEEF KHAN
M.A.,LL.B., **Advocate,**
No.16, 12th Cross, B.S.A. Road, 1st Stage, Pillanna Garden, B'lore-84.
M : 9845110533
Place : Bangalore Date : 09-03-2024

PUBLIC NOTICE

My client intends to purchase the properties mentioned in the below table from its respective owners. The owners represent that they are the absolute owners of the schedule properties and has good marketable, right title and interest therein and that apart from them there are no other persons/s having any right or claim over the schedule properties and they have not entered into any agreements/memorandum of understanding etc., for sale or creation of rights therein. The owners further represents that they have not mortgaged, created any right, interest and lien or encumbered the schedule property or any part thereof in any manner with any person.

It is hereby informed the general public that a charge, lien, mortgage right title or interest etc., on the schedule properties, shall with documentary evidence should notify the undersigned and lodge their objection/s or claims **within ten (10) days** fro the date of this notice with the undersigned, failing which, my client shall proceed with the above mentioned transactions.

SCHEDULE PROPERTIES
Shivakote Village, Hesargatta -1 Hobli, , Bengaluru North Taluq

Sl. No.	Sy No.	Name of owners	Extent A - G	Revenue Assessment Rs - Paise	Khata No	BOUNDARIES East	West	North	South
1	101/6	Sri.Bipul Dolui S/o. Sri. Ashutosh Dolui	0-13 ½ and 1 gunta kharab	1-35	101	Road	Property belongs to Sri.Bipul Dolui	Property belongs to Sri.Bipul Dolui	Property belongs to Hanuman-thappa
2	101/6	Sri.Bipul Dolui S/o. Sri. Ashutosh Dolui	0-05 ½	1-35	40	Road	Property belongs to Sri.Bipul Dolui	Remaining portion of land belonging to Ashwathamma	Property belongs to Sri.Bipul Dolui
3	101/5	Sri.Debashish Dolui S/o. Sri.Bipul Dolui	1-06	2.55	78	Property belongs to Sri.Bipul Dolui	Property belongs to Sri.B. Naraya-nappa	Road	Property belongs to Sri.B. Naraya-nappa

RAJENDRA.S.A, ADVOCATE,
ANGADI ASSOCIATES
S.V.Angadi, Sujata.S.Angadi, Rajendra.S.A, Advocates,
No.24, Pipeline Main Road Next to 7th B Cross, Malleshwaram, Bengaluru-560 003.
Mobile No: 98452-92045, Ph No: 080-23314922, rsangadi@gmail.com
Date: 09.03.2024 Bengaluru

THE KARUR VYSYA BANK LTD
ASSET RECOVERY BRANCH
Divisional Office Building, No.6, Shri Vasavi Temple Road, Near Sajjan Rao Circle, V V Puram, Bangalore - 560004

SALE NOTICE FOR SALE OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES

E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8(6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower (s) and Guarantor (s) that the below described immovable property mortgaged/ charged to the Secured Creditor, **The Karur Vysya Bank Ltd,** the constructive/ physical (whichever is applicable) possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of **The Karur Vysya Bank Ltd.,** Secured Creditor, will be sold on **"As is where is", "As is what is", and "Whatever there is"** on **26.03.2024 for recovery of Rs.1,03,93,454.69/- (Rupees One Crore Three Lakhs Ninety Three Thousand Four Hundred Fifty Four Paisa Six Nine only)** due to "The Karur Vysya Bank Ltd", Secured Creditor from **Shri. BHASKAR G N** S/o Mr. Nagaiah, residing at A88/155/2, 1st Cross,Chikkabeguru,Begur, Bangalore-560068. The reserve price will be **Rs.52,50,000/-(Rupees Fifty Two Lakhs and Fifty Thousand only)** and the earnest money deposit will be **Rs. 5,25,000/- (Rupees Five Lakhs and Twenty Five Thousand only)**

DESCRIPTION OF THE IMMOVABLE PROPERTY

All that piece and parcel of Residential apartment bearing Flat no. 303 (2 BHK), in Second floor, west facing, measuring, 1200 sqft of super builtup area, in the apartment building known as "DEVI GRAND VIEW" together with 223 sqft of undivided share situated at Site No. 19 and 20, old Khatha No. 24/1 & 24/2 then BBMP Khatha No. 998/24/1/19 and 987/38/24/1/24/2/20, present Khatha No. 998/24/1/24/2/19 & 20 Uttarahalli, Puttenahalli Ward No. 187, Sarakkikere, Bangalore, On the East by :Private Property, On the West by: Corridor, On the North by: Flat No. 304, On the South by: Private Property.

For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer to the link provided in our Bank's/ Secured Creditor's website i.e **www.kvb.co.in/Property** Under Auction also at the web portal **BankAuctions.in/ForeclosureIndia.com** of the service provider, **M/s. 4 closure.**

Statutory 15 Days' Notice under Rule 9(1) of the SARFAESI Act, 2002

The borrower/s and guarantor/s are hereby notified to pay the dues as mentioned above along with up to date interest and ancillary expenses before the date of e-Auction, failing which the Schedule property will be auctioned/sold and balance dues, if any, will be recovered with interest and cost.

Date : 04.03.2024 **Sd/- Authorized Officer**
Place: Bangalore **THE KARUR VYSYA BANK LIMITED**

THE KARUR VYSYA BANK LTD
ASSET RECOVERY BRANCH
Divisional Office Building, No.6, Shri Vasavi Temple Road, Near Sajjan Rao Circle, V V Puram, Bangalore - 560004,

SALE NOTICE FOR SALE OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES

E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8(6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower (s) and Guarantor (s) that the below described immovable property mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor, **The Karur Vysya Bank Ltd,** the **Constructive/Physical** (whichever is applicable) Possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of **The Karur Vysya Bank Ltd.,** Secured Creditor, will be sold on **"As is where is", "As is what is", and "Whatever there is" on 25.03.2024** for recovery of **Rs.45,17,802.07/-** (Rupees Forty Five lakhs Seventeen Thousand Eight Hundred Two and Paisa Seven Only) due to "The Karur Vysya Bank Ltd", Secured Creditor from **(1) Mr. Madhusudhan G C (Borrower),** S/o. Chikkamuniappa, Residing at No. 233, 3rd Cross, Bhoui colony, Gangappa Compound, Near Venkateshwara Temple, Ramamurthy Nagar, Bangalore – 560 016; **(2) Mrs. Anitha (Guarantor),** W/o. Mr. Madhusudhan G C, Residing at No. 233, 3rd Cross, Bhoui Colony, Gangappa Compound, Near Venkateshwara Temple, Ramamurthy Nagar, Bangalore – 560 016 and **(3) Mr. Umesh G C (Guarantor),** S/o. Chikkamuniappa, Residing at No. 34, St. Antony School Road, 11the Cross, ACC Layout, R M Nagar, Bangalore – 560 016. The reserve price will be **Rs. 80,00,000/-** (Rupees Eighty Lakhs only)and the earnest money deposit will be **Rs.8,00,000/-** (Rupees Eight Lakhs only).

DESCRIPTION OF THE IMMOVABLE PROPERTY

Schedule A : All the piece and parcel of the Residential Site and building situated at Site # 13, CMC Khatha No. 9319/5855/13, 4th Cross, Sri M V Layout Extension, Hosakote Town, Bangalore Rural District measuring East to West : 12.92 Mtrs, North to South : 10.66 Mtrs total 130.06 Sq. Mtrs or 1400 Sq.feet. Bounded on the On the East by : Site No. 14, On the West by : 25 feet Road, On the North by : 25 feet Road, On the South by : Government Well (Halla).

For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer to the link provided in our Bank's/ Secured Creditor's website i.e **www.kvb.co.in/Property** Under Auction also at the web portal **BankAuctions.in/ForeclosureIndia.com** of the service provider, **M/s. 4 closure.**

Statutory 15 Days' Notice under Rule 9(1) of the SARFAESI Act, 2002

The borrower/s and guarantor/s are hereby notified to pay the dues as mentioned above along with up to date interest and ancillary expenses before the date of e-Auction, failing which the Schedule property will be auctioned/sold and balance dues, if any, will be recovered with interest and cost.

Date : 08.03.2024 **Sd/- Authorized Officer**
Place : Bangalore **THE KARUR VYSYA BANK LIMITED**

SOUTHERN RAILWAY
TRIVANDRUM (WORKS BRANCH)
TRIVANDRUM DIVISION
E-TENDER NOTICE NO.V/W/TVC/5/2024 DATED 07-03-2024

Divisional Railway Manager/Works Branch/Trivandrum Division, Trivandrum-14 for and on behalf of the President of India invites ONLINE tenders for the following works as per tender notice and Complete details are given in our e-tender portal **www.ireps.gov.in**

Sl. No.	Description	App. Value (₹) In lakhs	Earnest Money Deposit (₹)
1	ADEN/TCR subdivision - Under water repairs for Br.No.98UP&DN,104UP&DN, 132UP&DN and 176UP.	49.22	98400
2	Thiruvananthapuram Division:- Proposed renewal of Existing Culverts with Rail/joist & slab, Stone slabs with RCC Box-12 bridges.	376.98	338500
3	TVC Division - Proposed Replacement of existing steel girders with PSC slab for Br. No. 128 Up (1x 12.20m) and Br.No.136 UP (1x 12.20m) in ERS-KTYM-KYJ section.	136.53	218300
4	TVC Yard - Manual deep screening and sleeper renewal of points and crossing.	117.19	208600
5	DRM Office complex: Improvements to DRM Office building - Personnel, Mechanical and Operation sections.	107.00	203500
6	ERS-KTYM-KYJ Section - Pro. Reconstruction of Exg. Bridge No. 297 (1x 4.57m PSC slab) as 1 x 6.10m RCC box at km. 58/00-100 between Ettumanur and Kottayam stations.	82.11	164200
7	1. Pro. Regirdering of Bridge No.161 Up (3 x 19.54 m span) at Km: 76/900-77/00 in SRR-ERS section 2. Pro. Regirdering of Bridge No. 174 Up. (1 x 18.30m span) At Km: 84/100-200 in ERS-KTYM-KYJ section 3. Pro. Jacketing and Inspection path of Br. No. 175 Up (3 x 24.40 span) in SRR - ERS section.	192.96	246500
8	TVC - Improvements to Track machine staff rest rooms.	69.81	139600
9	TVC Division - Proposed crash barriers on approaches of existing ROBs.	80.23	160500
10	Collection and training out of track ballast at PUDUKKAD depot.	266.86	283400

Period of completion in months: Sl. No. 1, 7, 9: SIX. **Sl. No. 2:** EIGHT. **Sl. No.: 3, 6, 8:** TEN. **Sl. No.:4, 5, 10:** TWELVE

Tender Closing date and time: Sl No: 1 to 10: 03-04-2024 at 11.00 hrs

Note: It is the responsibility of the tenderer to check any Corrigendum issued for any correction or modifications uploaded subsequently in website; the same shall be taken into account while submitting.

Divisional Railway Manager (Works) Trivandrum-14
Follow us on: twitter.com/GMSRailway

THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS
THE ALL-NEW APP
SCAN THE QR CODE TO DOWNLOAD THE APP
STAY UP-TO-DATE WITH THE LATEST NEWS
Google Play | App Store

TAMIL NADU MARITIME BOARD
(GOVERNMENT OF TAMIL NADU)
Tender Notice - Lump sum Items Rate Contract
(Two Cover System)
No.1036/CE/2024 - 02 **Dated 08.03.2024**

Tamil Nadu Maritime Board Invites Tender for the work of **"Creation of Berthing Facilities (Floating Jetty) at Cuddalore, Tamil Nadu"**, The Schedule of Important dates are as follows:

Tender Schedule available from	11.03.2024 @ 11:00 Hrs
Last date of submission	11.04.2024 @ 15:00 Hrs
Tender Opening Date	12.04.2024 @ 15:30 Hrs

For further details and Tender Documents, Please visit the website https://tntenders.gov.in/nicgep/app

DIPR.1492/Tender/2024
State Port Officer
Tamil Nadu Maritime Board

TATA CAPITAL HOUSING FINANCE LIMITED
Branch Address: Tata Capital Housing Finance Limited, No 82/1, Ground Floor, Krishna Towers, Richmond Road, Bengaluru – 560025.

POSSESSION NOTICE (FOR IMMOVABLE PROPERTY)
(As per Rule 8(1) of the Security Interest Enforcement Rules, 2002)

Whereas, the undersigned being the Authorized Officer of the TATA Capital Housing Finance Limited., under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(12) read with rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, issued a demand notice dated as below calling upon the Borrowers to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of the said notice.
The borrower, having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower, in particular and the public, in general, that the undersigned has taken Possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him under section 13(4) of the said Act read with rule 8 of the said Rules.
The borrower, in particular, and the public in general, are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of the **TATA Capital Housing Finance Limited,** for an amount referred to below along with interest thereon and penal interest, charges, costs etc. from date of demand notice.
The borrower's attention is invited to provisions of sub-section (8) of Section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.

Loan Account No.	Name of Obligor(s)/ Legal Heir(s)/Legal Representative(s)	Amount & Date of Demand Notice	Date of Possession
TCHHL04910001001822 82 & TCHIN0491000100194198	Mr. Abhishek Saha (Borrower)	As on 20.12.2023 Rs. 53,62,528/-	7th March, 2024

SCHEDULE - PROPERTY: SCHEDULE 'A' PROPERTYAll that piece and parcel of Converted property bearing Sy.No.13, Converted Vide,, Order No.B.DIS.ALN.SR. (NA) 16/2005-06, dated 02-01-2006 passed by the Special Deputy Commissioner, Bangalore, situated at Chikkabettahalli Village, Yelahanka Hobli, Bangalore North Taluk presently within the administrative jurisdiction of BBMP measuring 0-13 Guntas (East to West 170 Feet and North to South 75 Feet plus 1234 Square Feet totally measuring 14,000 Square Feet) and bounded on the East by: Property belongs to Smt. Shaheen Banu. West by: Property belongs to Mr.D.Selvaraj and others North by: Road and Private Property, South by: Private Property, SCHEDULE 'B' PROPERTY: Residential Flat bearing Flat No.303, in the Third Floor of the building known as "PROSPERHOMES BLISS" constructed on Schedule 'A' prope with super built up area of 1004.18 Sq.ft, together with 249.07 Sq.ft containing Two bed room, along with one car parking with undivided share of the land comprised in Schedule "A" Property.

TCHHL0883000100178409 & TCHIN0883000100179899	Mr. Mohamed Shafi M (Borrower) Mr. Mohamed Rafi, as (Co Borrower)	As on 21.12.2023 Rs.71,55,578/-	7th March, 2024

SCHEDULE - PROPERTY: ITEM NO.1.All that piece and parcel of the property bearing Gramatana Khaneshumari No.42, Old Khatha No.426, New Khatha No.308, Situated at GANIGARA STREET, KADUGODI VILLAGE, Bidarahalli Hobil, Bengaluru East Taluk, Comes under the jurisdiction of Bruhath Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP), Bengaluru, Measuring East to West: 34 Feet and North to South: 72 Fest, in all measuring 2448 Square Feet and bounded on the: East by: House belongs to Hayath Khan, West by: 4 feet Road and House belongs to Ameer Jhan, North by: Potter Puttamma's Property, South by : House belongs to Ekbhal @ Ekbhal Edrisimiya. ITEM NO. 2. All that piece and parcel of the property bearing Khatha No.305, Old Khatha No. 218/ 426, Kaneshumari No. 42, Khatha Endorsement No.690/2 001-02, Situated at GANIGARA STREET, KADUGODI VILLAGE, Bidarahalli Hobli, Bengaluru East Taluk, Comes under the jurisdiction of Bruhath Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP), Bengaluru, Measuring East to West: 34 Feet and North to Southi 24 Feet, in all measuring 816 Square Feet and bounded on the: East by: House belongs to Hayath Khan, West by: House belongs to Yajaz Pasha, North by: House belongs to Akther Begum, South by: Road

For Tata Capital Housing Finance Limited
Sd/-
Authorised Officer
Contact Add: 11th Floor, Tower A, Peninsula Business Park, Ganpatrao Kadam Marg, Lower Parel, Mumbai – 400013
Contact No. (022) 61827414, (022) 61827375
Date : 07th Mar 2024
Place : Bangalore

All the news. In just a click. Log to www.newindianexpress.com | THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS | /thenewindianexpress @newindianxpress +The New Indian Express | GET IT ON Google Play | Download on the App Store

3.2 GW of open access solar capacity India added during 2023, posting a 6.66% rise supported by factors, including reduced module cost, according to a report

Tata Sons mulls ways to avoid IPO

If it comes up with IPO, it will be one of the biggest in capital market history, say analysts

ARSHAD KHAN @ New Delhi

THE mega listing of Tata Sons is likely to get delayed as the holding company of $150 billion salt-to-steel conglomerate is exploring ways to get an exemption from current IPO norms for upper-layer non-banking finance companies (NBFC-UL).

According to reports, Tata Sons could consider re-organising its debt structure by repaying its existing debt or transferring it to a separate entity. By doing this, it won't have the compulsion to become a publicly listed firm by September 2025. Tata Sons is registered as a Core Investment Company (CIC) and is categorised as a non-banking finance company upper layer (NBFC-UL) by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

A CIC's main business is the acquisition of shares and securities. As per the Reserve Bank of India rule, a CIC should hold 90% or more of its net assets in the form of investment in equity shares, preference shares, bonds, debentures, debt or loans in group companies. The component of equity holdings should not be less than 60% of their assets. A CIC can be categorized as upper layer or middle layer NBFC.

The existing RBI rule notes if a CIC has assets worth less than ₹100 crore and does not raise public funds, it can avoid being classified as a CIC or an 'upper layer' NBFC. In this case, they aren't required to go for a public listing.

At the end of FY23, Tata Sons had a borrowing of about ₹20,000 crore while its assets are more than ₹100 crore. Its holding in listed Tata companies is pegged at ₹16 lakh crore. This leaves Tata Sons with the choice of restructuring its debt to avoid being a CIC and overcome the three year mandatory listing norm

The RBI in September 2022 had come up with a list of NBFCs, in which Tata Sons and Tata Capital were classified as upper-layer NBFCs. As per the current norms, an NBFC-UL has to become a listed company within three years of identification as NBFC-UL. This means Tata Sons and Tata Capital will have to launch an IPO by September 2025 if they continue to remain in the upper layer category or aren't given an exemption.

V Prashant Rao, Director and Head Equity Capital Markets, Anand Rathi Investment Banking, said with the central bank mandating Upper Layer NBFCs to list within a three year period of identification, Tata Sons has till September 25 to get itself listed.

"Tata Sons may look at other options too to avoid an IPO, but an IPO certainly helps unlock value and simplify the group structure. Whatever the valuations are, and if at all they plan an IPO, it will be one of the biggest in Indian capital market history," added Rao.

Equity Research firm Spark Capital has pegged ₹7.8 lakh crore valuation for the Tata group's NBFC holding company Tata Sons. Tata Trusts holds a 66% stake in Tata Sons, while Pallonji Mistry group has about an 18.4% stake.

VIABILITY OF LISTING

Tata Sons may consider reorganising debt structure by repaying existing debt or transferring it to a separate entity

By doing this, it won't have compulsion to become a publically listed firm by **SEPT 2025**

As per norms, an NBFC-UL has to become listed company within 3 years of identification as NBFC-UL

This means Tata Sons, Tata Capital will have to launch an IPO by Sept 2025 if they continue to remain in upper layer category or aren't given exemption

'It may look at other options too to avoid IPO, but IPO helps unlock value'

NEWSCOPE

POOR AD REVENUE, SLOW GROWTH CRIMP ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY

GURBIR SINGH

IF there is one sector that punches much above its weight, it is Media & Entertainment (M&E). Its actors and anchors are household names. From featuring on billboards they have found their way to political parties. Television shows like 'Big Boss', and 'Kaun Banega Crorepati?' are the stuff of family debate and commuter gossip.

Yet the companies who produce the entertainment content, and bring us news and live sports, are struggling. As the way people consume entertainment and news changes, companies must quickly adjust or die away. The big multiplex companies of yore – PVR and INOX – are in their last gasp as families now prefer to eat their chips and watch movies on Netflix.

The reason for the slow growth of media and entertainment is because it is a 'secondary' industry. It is largely dependent on advertising revenue, which in turn is dependent on how much other industry sectors are willing to spend on advertising, which is not much. For the individual consumer, 'entertainment' is always an 'optional' spend depending on how much is left after buying essentials like food. The poor growth of entertainment revenue is a reflection of India's slow consumption story.

Television shrinks

Every year the M&E Industry does a round of introspection. Hosted by FICCI and branded as 'Frames', the annual jamboree in its 24th year, convened in Mumbai once again this week. The attendance was low, the speakers middle-order and the mood tepid. Kevin Vaz, chairman of FICCI's media & entertainment committee, did try to work up some froth claiming, "India's entertainment industry was poised to captivate the world."

Mrinalini Jain, Chief Development Officer at content company, Banijay Asia and Endemol, on the other hand said at one of the sessions that though Indiansoap opera captures the intricacies of human relations, it is struggling to find markets overseas. The movement is only one way – 'The Good Wife', 'Big Boss' and 'Fear Factor' – are all formats lifted from successful US shows.

As Vaz reminded us, India produces a staggering 200,000 hours of content annually. This includes over 1,700 films, 3,000 hours of premium OTT content, and 20,000 songs. But the revenue they generate is a pittance. Does it reflect on the quality of the products? Or is it a marketing failure? The jury is still out on these questions.

The highlight of the 3-day industry evaluation is the Ernst & Young status report. It had, as it does every year, an optimistic ring; but a careful read reveals how much the industry is struggling. If there is a ray of hope, it is digital media.

The E&Y report said the

SOURAV ROY

M&E sector grew at about 8% in calendar 2023, an expansion of about ₹17,300 crore, to reach ₹2.32 lakh crore. While overall this was 21% above the pre-pandemic years, the report conceded traditional media – television, print and radio – lagged behind 2019 levels.

The big slowdown in advertising in the first half of CY2023 took a toll, especially television, the largest of the entertainment segments. Ad revenue actually fell 6.5% due to a slowdown in spending by gaming and D2C brands. There was a marginal growth in subscription, but overall television revenues were down 2% to ₹69,600 crore in 2023 from ₹70,900 crore in the previous year.

Change in pecking order

Regulation and the tight control over broadcasting licenses is a big concern. From the earlier galloping growth of TV channels, there is now a downturn: the total number of channels on air declining from 906 in 2021 to 899 in 2023. On the ground too the number of MSOs, the last mile cable-wallahs, have sharply fallen from 1,702 in December 2020 to 998 in December 2023.

There has been a marginal growth in the traditional segments, but it is linear and single-digit. Films for instance showed revenue of ₹19,700 crore, an increase of 14% over the previous year. But compare it to the pre-pandemic revenue of ₹19,100 crore, and it's crawling at 3%.

Expectedly, digital media was marked out as the hope for the future. Digital advertising grew 15% to reach ₹57,600 crore, or 51% of total advertising revenues. There was a slowdown in digital subscription though with revenue of ₹7,800 crore. E&Y expects digital media, as a segment, to overtake television by the end of 2024.

All this is reflecting in the new pecking order. The two Big Tech companies – Google and Meta (formerly Facebook) – are strides ahead of the biggest traditional M&E companies. Of the current estimated annual advertising revenue of ₹1.2 lakh crore, just Google India and Meta garner ₹43,308 crore, ahead of the combined ad revenue of Disney Star, Zee, Times and Sony.

Unfortunately 'Ficci Frames' failed to discuss the biggest contemporary shakeout roiling the industry – the coming merger of Reliance Industries (RIL), Viacom 18 and Disney Star. The new ₹70,000 crore ($ 8.5 billion) giant will compete ruthlessly with the Big Tech companies Meta and Google India for ad revenue and eyeballs.

It will ultimately be a Reliance company. Disney Star which will hold 37% will be reduced to a minority, perhaps preceding a complete exit from India. The merger raises big questions: Can an entity that will control 45% of the TV advertising market and about 34% of OTT sales pass our anti-monopoly laws? And will this suffocate creative content? But then that is another story.

GAIL reduces CNG price by ₹2.50 per kg

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU @ New Delhi

FOLLOWING Prime Minister Narendra Modi's announcement of a price cut on LPG cylinders, GAIL (India) Limited and its subsidiary GAIL Gas Limited have announced a reduction of ₹2.50 per kilogram (kg) for Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) prices across several key locations in India.

This reduction applies to all GAIL and GAIL Gas CNG outlets. In a press note, the company said that the move aims to make CNG a more attractive option for consumers, encouraging the adoption of clean fuels and promoting sustainable transportation practices.

"We are committed to promoting clean and affordable energy solutions," said Goutom Chakraborty, chief executive officer of GAIL Gas and executive director (CGD) of GAIL.

"The CNG price reduction reflects our dedication to making sustainable transportation accessible, while supporting the government's initiatives for cleaner air."

No diesel, petrol price cut until crude stabilises: Puri

Rakesh Kumar @ New Delhi

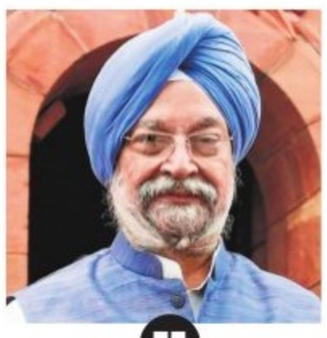
A day after reducing liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) cylinder prices by ₹100 nationwide, petroleum minister Hardeep Singh Puri clarified there are no plans to cut petrol and diesel prices in the domestic market until crude prices stabilise in the international market.

The minister cited volatile nature of the international oil market and ongoing under-recoveries by the oil marketing companies.

"I will only say if the situation in the outside world stabilises and oil prices stabilise, then the price cut on petrol and diesel can be considered. But if you say the attack is taking place somewhere in the world and insurance and freight prices go up... oil companies are incurring under-recoveries on the sale of diesel," said the petroleum minister.

The minister also mentioned the government was able to keep oil prices from shooting up despite global turbulence amid the Russia-Ukraine conflict and drone attacks on merchant ships in the Red Sea. As the general election is around the corner, it was believed that the government may cut the price of gasoline and diesel in the country. On March 8, 2024, the Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, announced slashing liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) cylinder prices by ₹100 in the country. With this price reduction, the standard 14.2-kg domestic LPG cylinder would cost ₹803 in Delhi, ₹802.50 in Mumbai, ₹829 in Kolkata, and ₹818.50 in Chennai.

Subsequently, GAIL also announced the price cut on CNG (Compressed Natural Gas) at ₹2.50 per kilogram. There is an expectation that the oil marketing companies can also cut down on the price of diesel and gasoline in the country. The reason being, oil companies such as Indian Oil Corporation, Bharat Petroleum Corporation, and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited have been profitable for the past three quarters. The last nationwide fuel price revision took place on May 21, 2022, when Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman reduced the excise duty on petrol by ₹8 per liter and on diesel by ₹6 per liter.



"I will only say if the situation in the outside world stabilises and oil prices stabilise, then the price cut on petrol and diesel can be considered"

Hardeep Singh Puri, petroleum minister

Business & Beyond

Big Success: Maiden voyage of MSC Lines for EXIM Containers at PPA

Unlocking Big Success, harnessing the power of sustained marketing strategy, today, Paradip Port saw inception of one of its kind EXIM Container Service at its PICT berth. World's biggest container line i.e. M/s Mediterranean Shipping Company (MSC) commenced the Paradip shuttle service under SE feeder corridor. MV MSC Tiger F made its maiden call at PICT terminal. It has LOA of 154.51 Meter and Beam of 25.21 Meter. It will be a regular & seamless call for catering EXIM cargo through port of Paradip as per planned 3 calls in a month through Paradip – Colombo route. The Ship embarked on its journey to Colombo Port with export Aluminum Cargo of 90 TEU on account of M/s Vedant and 36 TEU on account of M/s Jindal Stainless. P.L. Haranadh, Chairman, PPA stated, "It is a very special occasion for Paradip Port, as traditionally Paradip Port has been concentrating on Iron Ore, Coal and Crude Oil for the last 57 years since its traffic operation began in 1967."

UCO Bank organized "APRAJITA" Women's Conclave on International Women's Day

UCO Bank organized first of its kind "APRAJITA-Never Accepting Defeat" 2 days Women's Conclave on the Occasion of International Women's Day (08th March-24) at Vedic Village Resort, Kolkata in which over 120 women officers of the bank in Sr. executive cadre participated. The Conclave was inaugurated by Ashwani Kumar, MD & CEO, & addressed by Vijay N. Kamble, ED, UCO Bank. The event also addressed by eminent speakers on women empowerment, PoSH Act & motivation.

International Women's Day 2024: Bank of Baroda, Cuttack, organized Official Language

Cuttack: On the eve of "International Women's Day 2024", Bank of Baroda, Cuttack Region, organized the Official Language Seminar and Nari Shakti Samman Program under the joint auspices of Ravenshaw University, Cuttack. The theme of the seminar was "Her power within gives birth to a powerful society". At the outset of the program, the honorable guests on the stage, were welcomed with a book and a bouquet. Ranjeet Kumar, Regional Head, BoB, informed about the initiatives being taken by BoB on the occasion of International Women's Day. In the official language seminar organised on this occasion, university students and bank officials expressed their views. The winners of the Hindi Extempore Competition organized by BoB for the students of Ravenshaw University.

CLW surpasses the target of 2023-24

Chittaranjan: For financial year 2023-24, CLW was given production target of 540 locomotives. CLW has achieved it on 29 Feb, one month in advance. GM has congratulated the Team for achieving this milestone.

Gopal Sharma takes charge as Deputy Secretary/Public Relations, PSPCL Patiala

Gopal Sharma took charge as Deputy Secretary/Public Relations, PSPCL Patiala today. He had joined as Information Officer in the Electricity Board in 2001. Aftewards worked at different locations like Ludhiana, Bathinda , Lehra thermal , Under Different posting as a IPRO , Under Secretary now promoted as a deputy secretary. He told that he will put more efforts to attain new milestones in coming days.

PSU bank employees to get 5-day work week, 17% annual wage hike

MONIKA YADAV @ New Delhi

IN a significant development, the Indian Banks' Association and bank employee unions have agreed on five-day workweek for all PSU bank employees. The Department of Financial Services (DFS) under the Ministry of Finance, has given its nod to it, as per sources in the know.

The government will issue a formal notification in this regard. Besides this, both the IBA and banks' unions have also had consensus on 17% hike in annual wage hike with effect from November 01, 2022.

"Today marks a significant milestone for the #bankingindustry as IBA and #UFBU #AIBOA #AIBASM and #BKSM have signed the 9th Joint Note and 12th #Bipartite Settlement regarding #Wage Revision for Bank Officers and Employees, which will take effect on November 1, 2022. @ PIB_India #dfs," IBA chief executive officer Sunil Mehta said in a tweet.

The new five-day workweek decision is projected to incur an additional annual expenditure of about ₹8,284 crore for public sector banks. This wage increase, effective from November 2022, is anticipated to benefit approximately 800,000 bank employees.

Following the agreement between the IBA and bank employee unions, the new pay scales for PSU bank employees incorporate the merging of Dearness Allowance linked to 8088 points. As per the joint declaration, the effective load on the basic pay after merging the dearness allowance at 30.38% with an applicable 3.22% load stands at 4.20%.

In the revised wage settlement, female employees are granted one sick leave day per month without the need for a medical certificate.

In addition, accumulated privilege leave can be monetized up to 255 days upon retirement or in case of an employee's demise during service. Retired individuals will receive a monthly ex-gratia payment, alongside the pension or family pension from Public Sector Banks including SBI. This is applicable to pensioners and family pensioners entitled to receive pension by October 31, 2022, including those who retired on that specific date.

Govt to issue a formal notification soon

The government will issue a formal notification in this regard. Besides this, both the IBA and banks' unions have also had consensus on 17% hike in annual wage hike with effect from November 1, 2022.

RESHUFFLE

Zee Ent rejigs revenue vertical of broadcast biz

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU @ New Delhi

ZEE Entertainment Enterprises (ZEE) on Saturday rejigged its revenue vertical of broadcast business. Ashish Sehgal, chief growth officer, advertisement revenue will directly report into the MD & CEO Punit Goenka.

Rahul Johri, who led the revenue and monetisation vertical of the group has resigned after over a three-year stint. The company has accepted the resignation of Johri. Since the MD & CEO will be directly working with the revenue teams, all other reportees of Johri, will report into the office of Punit Goenka.

The management of the company, under the leadership of Goenka, will continue to take all the required steps that are aimed towards enhancing the performance of the company and most above, in the interest of its esteemed shareholders.

Goenka said in a statement he looks forward to working with Ashish and team, with an aim to drive higher growth in advertisement revenue, as the linear business landscape unlocks more growth opportunities.

On Rahul Johri's exit, Goenka said: "Rahul has added immense value to the organisation. I wish him all the success in his future endeavors. I am most certain that with his passion towards sports and media business."

French Open: Lakshya goes down fighting

India star shuttler Lakshya Sen went down fighting against Thailand's Kunlavut Vitidsarn in the men's singles semifinals of the ongoing French Open in Paris late on Saturday. Lakshya won the first game but Vitidsarn, the reigning world champ, fought back in an impressive manner to clinch the match (20-22, 21-13, 21-11).

Very much in the final winter of his career, veteran TT star Sharath set for one final date with the Olympics

GEARED UP FOR LAST DANCE IN PARIS

SWAROOP SWAMINATHAN
@Chennai

JUST as Spring turns to full fledged Summer in Paris, some of the world's most decorated athletes will descend on the city for the Olympics. Amongst all of them, a 42-year-old — he will celebrate his birthday days before boarding the flight (if all goes well between now and then) — will be A Sharath Kamal. When he made his debut at the Athens Games, he was 22. Two decades later, he has pushed himself for one final tilt at immortality.

"This will be my last Olympics," he tells this daily a day before leaving for Singapore for a WTT event. The frank admission, though, came earlier during the interaction. He admits that if the men's team hadn't qualified, he would have contemplated walking away from the sport right then. "Team qualification had been the main goal over the last two years," he says. "We see big potential there; win a round and you are in the quarterfinals. You never know in the quarterfinals, on your day anything can happen. An upset and you are in with a chance"

For the record, a team qualification means two players from the team will compete in the singles competition but Sharath isn't guaranteed a spot (it's up to the selection committee). But he wants to spend more time talking about the team qualification. "It's a boost to the entire ecosystem," in his words. Over the last decade or so, table tennis has given the country some historic highs at the Commonwealth and the Asian Games. But, somehow, the sport's relation with the Sports Authority of India (SAI) has changed. "It's not a high priority sport," Sharath explains. "SAI has also slowly started reducing funding. There are other sports with medal prospects and they are investing more on that. TOP (Target Olympic Podium) Scheme are also planning to weed some players out; they anyway will. So the qualification of the men's and women's teams will actually support the entire ecosystem."

If anybody knows anything about the ecosystem of table tennis in India, it's Sharath, who is set to become one of the very few five-time Olympians this country has seen (the short list includes Leander Paes, Abhinav Bindra and Shiva Keshavan). While he is firm on Paris being his final Olympic journey, he remains non-committal on whether it will be his last international outing. "The thought process was exactly that," he says when asked if he had thought about hanging up his paddle if the team had failed to qualify. "Those thoughts were there but at least this will be a good way to say goodbye to the Olympics.

"I haven't yet decided whether it will be my last international. I think the Asian Championships begins immediately after the Olympics so if they need me...

When did he get this clarity? "I didn't have this at the end of 2022. But over the last year or so, I can say, yes, I have had this clarity, about slowly going into the administrative side of things (once the Olympics are over)."

In a way, he's already into administration as he was elected as vice-chair of the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) in November 2022. Over the last few months though, his in-tray has been put on ice. "If you have been following lately, you would have noticed I haven't said much about this (his administrative role at the IOA. Over the last 2-3 months, I have told myself 'this is my last chance'. "I don't want to get too much into that side of things. Once the Olympics are over, I will do what's necessary in my role with the IOA." Summer-time in Paris is when the city is filled with romance with its various art galleries, quaint cafes, churches, monuments and museums welcoming visitors from all over the world. Can Sharath, well into the winter of his career, conjure a final romance?

Sunday Special

Indian players celebrate after winning the fifth Test against England in Dharamsala on Saturday | PTI

Players stand to gain fortune with BCCI's latest scheme

GOMESH S @ Dharamsala

MINUTES after India completed a 4-1 series win on Saturday afternoon in Dharamsala, the BCCI announced a Test Cricket Incentive Scheme for the senior men's team with an aim to provide financial growth and stability to the players in the longer format.

This initiative, dated back from the 2022-23 season, includes an additional reward structure apart from the existing match fee — ₹15 lakh per Test for the players.

Assuming if there are nine Tests in a season, a player who features in the squad for less than four games will not get any benefits. Playing members, who feature in 5-6 Tests, will get ₹30 lakh per match and non-playing members will get ₹15 lakh per Test for the same number of games.

If a player features in more than seven games, they will get ₹45 lakh per Test while a non-playing member in the same category will get ₹22.5 lakh per match. For example, Cheteshwar Pujara, who played six games in the 2022-23 season, is expected to get ₹1.8 crore incentive apart from the ₹90 lakh which he will get as match fee. Meanwhile, Umesh Yadav, who played only four games, but was part of the squad for six in the 2022-23 season could get ₹1.5 crore as incentive apart from ₹75 lakh as match fee.

BCCI secretary Jay Shah said that the initiative will be beneficial players who have been part of the team in the longer format since 2022-23.

"The new initiative will help players like Pujara, KS Bharat and Umesh Yadav. They are all dedicated Test players. Total outflow will be 45 crore. It will start from 2022 onwards," Shah told reporters on Saturday.

India head coach Rahul Dravid said that it is nice that the hard work that goes into the toughest format is being recognised. "I think it is a reward, not an incentive. Looking at the guys who came in and played in this series, I think everyone wants to play Test cricket. It's just a recognition of what you need to be able to do to survive and play in Test cricket. It's only when you get here that you realise that sometimes it's quite tough and it is not easy but it is extremely satisfying," he said on Saturday.

SCOREBOARD

England 1st innings 218. India 1st innings (o/n 473/8): Kuldeep c Foakes b Anderson 30; Bumrah st Foakes b Bashir 20; Siraj n.o 0; **Extras** (lb4, nb2) 6. Total (all out, 124.1 ovs) 477. FoWs: 1-104, 2-275, 3-279, 4-376, 5-403, 6-427, 7-427, 8-428, 9-477, 10-477.; **Bowling:** Anderson 16-2-60-2, Wood 15-1-89-0, Hartley 39-3-126-2, Bashir 46.1-5-173-5, Stokes 5-1-17-1, Root 3-0-8-0.; **England 2nd innings:** Crawley c Sarfaraz b Ashwin 0; Duckett b Ashwin 2; Pope c Jaiswal b Ashwin 19; Root c Bumrah b Kuldeep 84; Bairstow lbw Kuldeep 39; Stokes b Ashwin 2; Foakes b Ashwin 8; Hartley lbw Bumrah 20; Wood lbw Bumrah 0; Bashir b Jadeja 13; Anderson n.o 0. **Extras** (b6, lb1, nb1) 8. **Total** (all out, 48.1 ovs) 195. FoWs: 1-2, 2-21, 3-36, 4-92, 5-103, 6-113, 7-141, 8-141, 9-189, 10-195.; **Bowling:** Bumrah 10-2-38-2, Ashwin 14-0-77-5, Jadeja 9-1-25-1, Yadav 14.1-0-40-2, Siraj 1-0-8-0.

DOMINANT SHOW: ROHIT & CO COMPLETE SERIES WIN IN STYLE

DHARAMSALA: At about 11.35 AM on Saturday, India head coach Rahul Dravid walked out onto the field to have a look at the pitch. It was Lunch on Day 3 of the final Test between India and England. The scoreboard at the HPCA Stadium, Dharamsala read England 103/5, still trailing by 156 runs. While India started the day with 473/8, it did not take long for England to wrap things up. The hosts could only add four runs with James Anderson reaching 700 wickets. From thereon, it was always going to be a matter of time till England crumbled. And predictably so, the visitors were all out for 195 before tea as India registered an innings and 64-run victory to win the five-match series 4-1.

For full story by Gomesh S, visit newindianexpress.com

Sometimes we take home wins for granted: Dravid

GOMESH S @ Dharamsala

ADDRESSING the media for the first time since the defeat in Hyderabad, India head coach Rahul Dravid shed light on multiple aspects, including India's dominance, the performance of debutants, Shreyas Iyer and Ishan Kishan missing central contacts and more. Excerpts

On India's home record

Obviously, defeats in India have been rare and I'd like to acknowledge and credit the players for that. It is not easy. I think sometimes we just take it for granted. I think what is especially heartening is over the last 10 years or a decade or so, India have had this dominance and has been able to string together successful series. (India) have not lost a lot of Test matches inspite of the fact that the exposure that the foreign players get in this country, compared to what they would get in the 90s or the 80s or even early 2000s before the IPL is not comparable. A lot of foreign players who come here spend a lot of time in this country. A lot of them are here for two months a year in India. I know it is a different format but it is about familiarity, it is about getting used to these conditions. So that's made it a lot easier. But inspite of that, the fact that we've been able to maintain that record and the standard is a real tribute to the players and the way they've performed and the skills that they're continuing to show.

Performance of debutants

It was really good to see them step up. I would like to give credit to Ajit Agarkar and his team as well. As a coach and sometimes as a captain, we don't get to see domestic cricket. We have to rely on Ajit and his team to tell us who are the guys in domestic cricket who can step up and fill in the gaps when required. They have been spot-on and guided us in the right direction. We pick the playing eleven finally but they are the ones who guide us when it comes to the domestic cricketers. Sometimes they don't get the credit they deserve as selectors but I would really like to acknowledge their contributions.

On importance of A tours

All of these guys were just recently playing an A tour against England. That really helped us to see which are the guys performing and doing well currently. All those guys just came in and were able to perform in this series as well. That's a very important part. I've been involved in that process at the NCA some years ago, and I know how critical a piece that is in our system. Because we have got a lot of domestic cricket. We play a lot of Ranji Trophy and all of that. The A team is the perfect bridge between these two standards (domestic cricket and international cricket.) It really helps you identify the players who are in form and can do it. Obviously the guys have done well but there's a lot of work behind the scenes at the domestic level that needs to be recognised.

On Shreyas and Kishan

They're always in the mix. Everyone who's playing domestic cricket is in the mix. Firstly, I don't decide contracts, right? Contracts are decided by the selectors and the board. I don't even know what the criteria are. I'm involved in – people ask me my opinion on the 15, and me and Rohit select the 11. That's how it works. We've never discussed whether somebody has a contract or not, whether he's going to be selected in the 15. There are enough examples of people playing different formats of the game, whether they have contracts or not. I don't even know sometimes what the list of the contracted players is, when we take these decisions, discussions on the 15 or the playing 11 for that matter. No one's out of the picture, no one's out of the mix, it's just a question of hopefully them getting back and fit, playing cricket, and forcing the selectors to pick them again.

RANJI TROPHY

Mumbai eye 42nd title, face Vidarbha challenge in final

AGENCIES @ Mumbai

LED by an astute captain in Ajinkya Rahane, Mumbai will look to maintain their hegemony on Ranji Trophy with a 42nd title but a gutsy and battle-hardened Vidarbha won't make it easy for the legacy champions in the much-anticipated final starting here on Sunday.

In Mumbai, coming second best is never a consolation and nothing short of a title would satisfy the connoisseurs of Mumbai cricket sitting in the Garware pavilion of the Wankhede Stadium.

If Mumbai have found multiple heroes from Nos 1 to 11 to sail through, the two-time winners Vidarbha, whose twin title wins came not too long ago, have managed to put on consistent performances across departments to make their way into the summit class of India's premier domestic meet.

SQUADS: Mumbai: Ajinkya Rahane (c), Prithvi Shaw, Bhupen Lalwani, Amogh Bhatkal, Shreyas Iyer, Musheer Khan, Hardik Tamore (wk), Prasad Pawar (wk), Tanush Kotian, Shams Mulani, Atharva Ankolekar, Shardul Thakur, Tushar Deshpande, Mohit Avasthi, Royston Dias, Dhawal Kulkarni. **Vidarbha:** Akshay Wadkar (c&wk), Atharva Taide, Dhruv Shorey, Karun Nair, Yash Rathod, Mohit Kale, Harsh Dubey, Lalit Yadav, Aditya Sarwate (vc), Yash Thakur, Aditya Thakare, Darshan Nalkande, Siddhesh Wath (wk), Akshay Wakhare, Aman Mokhande, Umesh Yadav, Danish Malewar, Mandar Mahale. ***LIVE: 9:30am***

Medallists from Pune & Jaipur natls set for trials

FIROZ MIRZA @ Chennai

THE tug-of-war continues as despite reaching a agreed formula to hold selection trials, the tussle for control over Wrestling Federation of India looks unending. It is understood that after talks between all stakeholders, including the sports ministry and the WFI, it was agreed that medallists from Pune and Jaipur nationals, can take part in the trials.

The competitions to pick men's freestyle and Greco-Roman wrestlers will be held on Sunday at SAI centre Sonepat as announced by the ad-hoc committee formed by the Indian Olympic Association to oversee the functioning of the WFI. Similarly, the trials for women wrestlers will be held the next day at SAI centre in Patiala. The WFI had announced to organise trials at IG Stadium in New Delhi but withdrew the circular following a directive from the Delhi High Court.

The court might have authorised the ad-hoc body to hold trials but the world governing body, United World Wrestling, made it clear through its letter that only its affiliated unit WFI can send entries for international tournaments including the events in question - Asian Championships and Asian Olympic Games Qualifier.

The UWW's stand seems to be the reason behind the recent partnership forged between all stakeholders. "The court's directives meant only ad-hoc panel can organise trials but the UWW will not accept their entries. At this point of time, there can be no other option but hold the trials to make sure Indian wrestlers compete in the Olympic qualifier and continental event," a source keeping a track of the developments told this daily.

It must be understood that once the UWW says it recognises the WFI, then no other entity can organise the trials, including appointing technical delegates to oversee the trials. It is learnt that all stakeholders decided to form a committee of observers with a representative each from WFI, sports ministry, ad-hoc panel and IOA. However, it is learnt that WFI will appoint the referees and other officials for the competitions. "The coaches and referees will sign the results and would be sent to UWW on Monday after the trials. No one from the ad-hoc panel will sign the results," added the source.

WFI president Sanjay Kumar Singh is unlikely to remain present but an office-bearer from Delhi wrestling association could be WFI's representative in the trials.

Full story: newindianexpress.com

BAJRANG AT SONEPAT

Tokyo Olympic bronze medallist Bajrang Punia, who led the protest against former WFI president, is set to take part in the trials. It is learnt that the champion wrestler was there at the venue polishing his wares along with a foreign coach.

EXPRESS READ

Harmanpreet powers MI win over GG

NEW DELHI: Captain Harmanpreet Kaur hammered a brutal 95 not out, including 10 fours and five sixes, as Mumbai Indians came back roaring in their Women's Premier League game to defeat Gujarat Giants by seven wickets. Earlier, Gujarat Giants posted 190 for 7 with Beth Mooney leading the way with 66. But it was Dayalan Hemalatha, who batted at three, struck a belligerent 74 to emerge as the top scorer.

Brief scores: Gujarat Giants 190/7 in 20 ovs (Mooney 66, Hemalatha 74; Saika Ishaque 2/31) lost to Mumbai Indians 191/3 in 19.5 ovs (Bhatia 49, Harmanpreet 95 n.o.; Kanwar 1/21)

Para shooter wins Paralympic quota

NEW DELHI: India's Mona Agarwal, competing in only her fourth international competition, won the gold medal in women's 10m air rifle SH1 category at the WSPS Para Shooting World Cup to clinch a 2024 Paris Paralympic quota place for the country here on Saturday. Avani Lekhara, the 2020 Tokyo Paralympics gold medallist, won the bronze medal in the event. Mona, 37, who took up shooting sport in December 2021 after making a mark at the state level in shot put and powerlifting, has become the ninth Indian para shooter to secure a Paris berth.

Oly qualifier: Hussamuddin crashes out

AGENCIES @ Busto Arsizio

WORLD Championships bronze medallist Mohammed Hussamuddin made a disappointing return to competitive boxing after an injury lay-off, losing 0-4 to Ireland's Jude Gallagher in the men's 57kg clash at the 1st World Olympic Boxing Qualifier here.

Hussamuddin, had earlier received a first-round bye.

Competing for the first time since the 2023 World Championships quarterfinals when he injured his left knee, Hussamudin took some time to settle in which allowed his opponent Birmingham CWG champion to take a lead with his technical prowess. The youngster used speed and agility to his advantage, pocketing the first round 5-0. The Hyderabad-born boxer did try to cover lost ground in round two but his comeback became even more difficult after he was handed a one-point deduction for dropping his head.

Hyderabad score late to stun Chennaiyin

AGENCIES @ Chennai

HYDERABAD FC secured their first win of the Indian Super League (ISL) campaign as the Thangboi Singto-coached team defeated Chennaiyin FC by 1-0 in their backyard at the Jawaharlal Nehru Indoor Stadium on Saturday.

In an encounter where forwards from both sides created numerous goal-scoring chances, Hyderabad FC returned as the happier unit as Chennaiyin were handed a massive blow amidst their aspirations to qualify to the playoffs. The crossbar of both goalposts was rattled multiple times, but the eventual breakthrough came from Sajad Parray who netted the winner amidst an overcrowded Chennaiyin box in the 89th minute. Chennaiyin had several chances to get a foot ahead in the match, with their attacking trio of Ninthoinganba Meetei, Vincy Barretto, and Farukh Choudhary teaming brilliantly with Brazilian playmaker Rafael Crivellaro to take shots at Hyderabad custodian Laxmikant Kattimani.

Hyderabad FC's Sajad Parray (C) rejoices after scoring against Chennaiyin | ISL

Rashford and Fernandes on scoresheet in United victory

AGENCIES @ Manchester

EVERTON paid for conceding two first-half penalties at Old Trafford as Manchester United bounced back to winning ways to keep their Champions League hopes for next season alive with a 2-0 victory on Saturday. Bruno Fernandes and Marcus Rashford converted from the spot to extend Everton's winless run in the Premier League to 11 games.

Victory takes United to within eight points of fourth-placed Aston Villa and three of Tottenham in fifth.

Results: Bournemouth **2-2** Sheffield; Crystal Palace **1-1** Luton; Manchester United **2-0** Everton; Wolves **2-1** Fulham.

Yamal lifts Barcelona

MADRID: A sublime Lamine Yamal goal lifted Barcelona to a 1-0 win over a battling Real Mallorca as the La Liga champions climbed into second place in Spain. Barcelona now have 61 points with ten games left.

"Have we ever wondered who is poor? Is it not necessary to count all this? The caste survey in Bihar revealed that 88% of the poor comes from Dalit, tribal, backward and minority communities. It is just a small glimpse of the real picture of the country. That is why we are going to take two historic steps — caste census and economic mapping — on the basis of which we will remove the reservation limit of 50%," Congress leader Rahul Gandhi said

WHY

LINGAYATS, VOKKALIGAS ARE AGAINST KARNATAKA'S CASTE CENSUS

ASHWINI M SRIPAD @Bengaluru

LINGAYATS claim to be close to 17% of Karnataka's estimated seven crore population, making them the single-largest caste in the state. In other words, they peg their population at 1.2 crore. Similarly, Vokkaligas claim to be 15% of the total population or 1.05 crore, claiming the second-largest caste spot. Dominant is the word both communities are described by in Karnataka politics. More often than not their representatives are decision makers in almost all walks of life.

But that settled social order is in for a disruption as the recent Socio-economic and Education Survey, popularly known as the 'caste census report', knocked both these communities out of their pedestal. Its report was submitted to Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on February 28 by K Jayaprakash Hegde, the then chairman of the Karnataka State Commission for Backward Classes (KSCBC).

It created ripples among the two big communities, as the survey is said to have placed the Lingayat population at a mere 65 lakh (10.9%) and Vokkaligas at 60 lakh (10%) while bringing down Karnataka's total population to 5.98 crore though it already was 6.1 crore as per the 2011 census. The survey is also said to have found 1,351 different castes in the state. Of the 5.98 crore people, over 3.98 crore are from the AHINDA (Kannada acronym for minorities, backward classes and Dalits) group, while 1.87 crore are part of a basket of Lingayats, Vokkaligas, Brahmins and other castes, as per the report. If Lingayats and Vokkaligas aren't caste chart toppers, they would stand to lose the commensurate social and welfare benefits, hence the disquiet.

The survey instead placed the Scheduled Castes on top of the pecking order, followed by the Muslims (see chart). Lingayats and Vokkaligas stood third and fourth on the list, respectively. As a result, the panel is learnt to have recommended increasing the quota for the SCs. It also stressed that "Veerashaivas and Lingayats are the same", sources said.

For the state government, the report is a political hot potato. Several days after its submission, it has not yet put the report out in public domain. While Siddaramaiah is a master at backward class politics, which was why he commissioned the survey, the Lingayats and Vokkaligas aren't amused. How well he manages to balance the aspirations of the backward classes with those of the dominant communities remains to be seen.

The dominant castes

The Lingayats are members of a religious sect found more in the South and Maharashtra, especially Karnataka, since the 12th century AD during Jagadguru Basavanna's time. Their population concentration is in North Karnataka and the Central Karnataka region. The Vokkaligas, who basically depend on agriculture, are largely dominant in the old Mysuru region and also in the Malnad region in Karnataka. It was during B S Yediyurappa's tenure as chief minister in 2020 that the Veerashaiva Lingayat Development Corporation was constituted. He had even announced ₹500 crore for their development.

The Vokkaliga is a community of closely-related castes, mainly in Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. They are warriors and cultivators, with a historically notable demographic as they have political and economic dominance in the Old Mysore region. As per some historians, the Rashtrakutas and Western Gangas were of Vokkaliga origin. The Vokkaligas occupied administrative positions in the Vijaynagar Empire and later formed the early rulers of the Nayakas of Keladi. The Vokkaligas had the most families in the ruling classes of the 17th century. Under the Kingdom of Mysore, they served in the army and the militia. Most subsects of the Vokkaliga community are designated as forward castes by the Union government, while some subsects in rural areas are designated as Other Backward Classes by the Karnataka government.

Opposition to caste census report

Leaders from the Vokkaliga and Lingayat communities are dead against the caste census. The Akhila Bharatha Veerashaiva Lingayat Mahasabha is pressuring Chief Minister Siddaramaiah as well as the state government to reject the report. The Mahasabha in its 24th general assembly in Davanagere in December last year decided to oppose it tooth and nail. They are threatening to hold a statewide protest if the report is accepted.

Vokkaliga stance

Soon after Hegde submitted the report, voices against it started getting shriller. Chief Minister Siddaramaiah said he would place the report before the Cabinet and seek his colleagues' opinion. He also said he would seek legal and expert views. However, the report is yet to reach the Cabinet, and chances are it may have to at least await the end of the Lok Sabha polls.

Just a few months ago, Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar, a Vokkaliga, and other leaders from his community had urged the CM not to accept the report. They claimed it was not put together scientifically as there was no proper door-to-door survey. The Vokkaligara Sangha had submitted a memorandum to the CM against the caste census, which was signed by Shivakumar, agriculture minister N Cheluvarayaswamy and higher education minister M C Sudhakar in the ruling Congress government, prominent Vokkaliga seers including Sri Nirmalananda Swamiji of Adichunchanagiri Mahasamsthana, Sri Nanjavadutha Mahaswamiji of Sri Guru Gundla Brahmeshwara Mahasamsthana Mutt and Kumarachandrashekaranatha Mahaswamiji of Vishwa Vokkaliga Mahasamsthana Mutt.

The Karnataka Vokkaliga Sangha and Rajya Vokkaligara Meesalaathi Horata Samithi had written to Siddaramaiah claiming that the Hegde commission quantified the state's population as 5.9 crore though the Aadhaar data puts it at over 6.9 crore. They went on to allege that those who conducted the survey did not visit all the households. "The present Hegde's report is based on Kantharaju's report and Kantharaju's report was done during 2014-15, which means there is a gap of 10 years. In the last ten years, there have been drastic changes and making a report based on this is unscientific," it stated. The state government claims to have spent ₹169 crore to conduct the caste census.

Lingayat reaction

Siddaramaiah also faced embarrassment when 30 Lingayat MLAs urged him to reject the report. It was also signed by Congress ministers in his cabinet, including M B Patil, Shivananda Patil and Eshwar Khandre. Congress MLA Shamanuru Shivashankarappa, who heads the Veerashaiva Mahasabha, also expressed opposition to the report. A veteran Congressman, Shivashankarappa, who will turn 94 this June, is the senior-most MLA in the present Karnataka Assembly. He hails from Davanagere in the Central Karnataka region, which has a large Lingayat population. His son S S Mallikarjun is a minister in Siddaramaiah's cabinet.

The Mahasabha demanded a re-survey. Shivashankarappa recently told reporters that the Kantharaju/Hegde report is based on 10-year-old data. "We are estimating there are over two crore people from the Lingayat community and we will conduct a survey from our Mahasabha. With the help of Vokkaligas and Brahmins, we are going to fight it. We do not accept this report," he said. He went on to claim that his community (Lingayat) is distraught. "Things were better when J H Patel and S Nijalingappa were chief ministers," he told the media. The Mahasabha meanwhile is also demanding a Deputy CM post for their community.

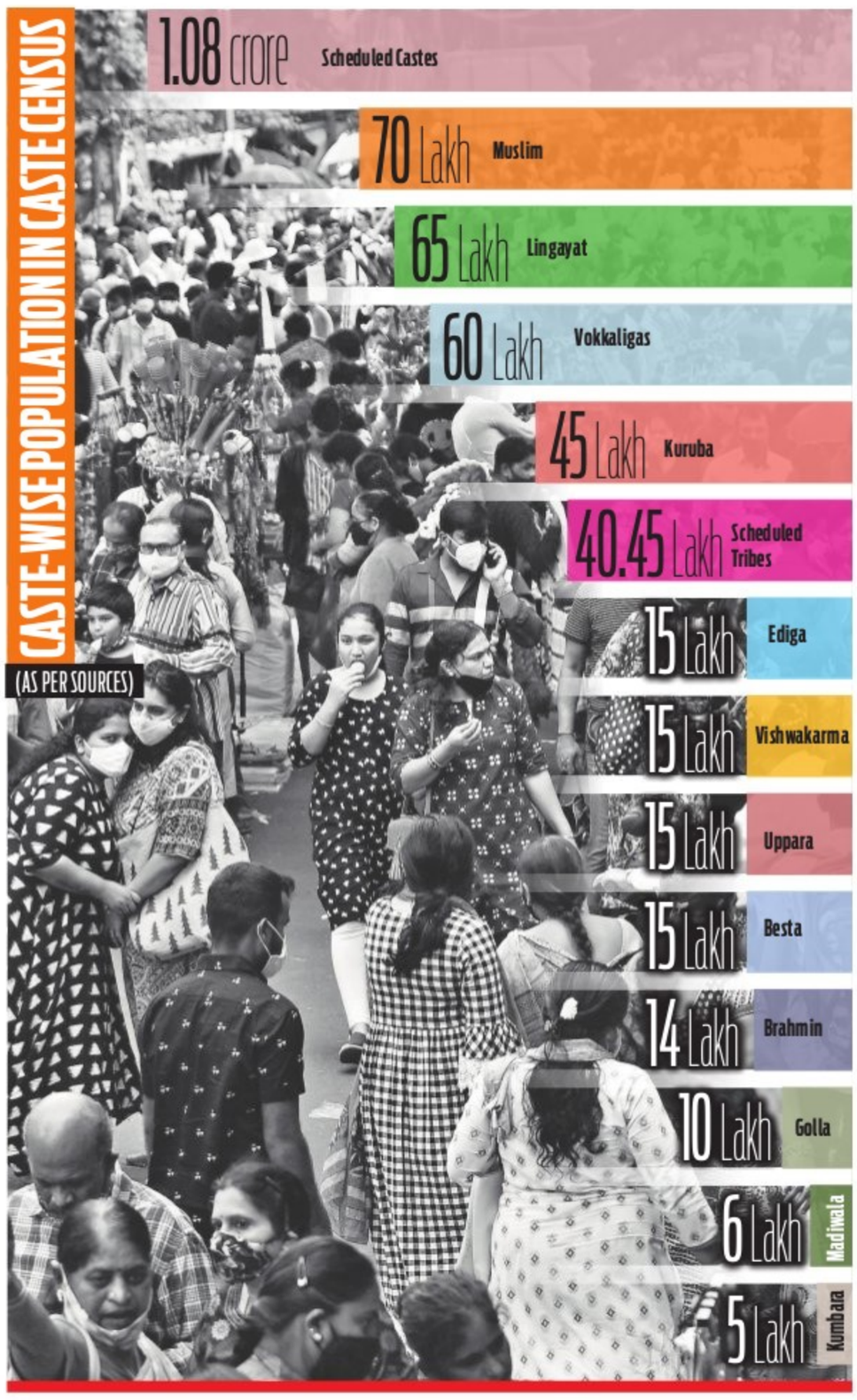
The background

It was during his first tenure as chief minister between 2013 and 2018 that Siddaramaiah had commissioned the survey. The then chairman of KSCBC, H Kantharaju, had prepared his report in 2018. But it was neither accepted nor made public. When Kantharaju's term as chairman ended, the short-lived BJP government (May 17-23, 2018) appointed Jayaprakash Hegde as his successor. Hegde's tenure ended on February 28, the day he submitted the report to the state government.

Siddaramaiah had earlier accused H D Kumaraswamy who was heading the Congress-JD(S) coalition government, of dragging his feet on the report during his watch as chief minister from May 23, 2018 to July 23, 2019.

Since 1947, Karnataka (including Mysuru State) has seen 22 CMs, some of whom served as CM more than once. Of them, 15 of them are from the Lingayat and Vokkaliga communities (8 Lingayats and 7 Vokkaligas). Both the Congress and the BJP fielded many Vokkaligas and Lingayats for the 2023 Assembly polls and most of them won. In 1990, when the Congress high command forced M Veerendra Patil, one of the prominent Lingayat leaders, to resign as chief minister, the community took it personally and moved away from the grand old party. With their representation reduced as per the latest census report, community members fear losing their representation politically as well. Not just in the cabinet, many of the boards and Corporations are headed by members of these two communities.

During his first term as chief minister, Siddaramaiah had proposed a separate religion tag for Lingayats and secured the cabinet's approval. But it was widely opposed by many seers within the community as well as the Opposition BJP. In fact, it caused damage to the party in 2018, reducing the share of Congress MLAs in the assembly.



JUDICIARY KNOCKING DOWN GENDER DISCRIMINATION, ONE INSTITUTION AT A TIME

T K VINEETH @Kochi

THE Supreme Court's ultimatum to the Central government to grant permanent commission to women officers in the Indian Coast Guard is in line with the court's view that gender discrimination in whatever form cannot be tolerated. The court's loud message – that it will issue a favourable order if the government doesn't – was delivered during the hearing of a petition moved by Indian Coast Guard officer Priyanka Tyagi on February 26. The bench headed by Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud rejected outright Attorney General R Venkataramani's explanation that there were "functional and operational difficulties" in granting permanent commissions to women, saying such excuses won't wash anymore. "All these functionality etc argument does not hold water in 2024. Women cannot be left out. If you do not do it, we will do it," the CJI told the government's top law officer.

Coast Guard caught off-guard

Petitioner Priyanka Tyagi had an illustrious career with the Coast Guard. She joined as an assistant commandant in 2009 and was promoted to deputy commandant 2015. Tyagi was part of the first-ever all-women crew on Dornier aircraft deployed in 2016 in the Eastern Region for maritime patrolling. "The petitioner has 4,500 flying hours on Dornier, the highest flying hours as per her seniority in all the forces, including male and female, and has heroically saved over 300 lives at sea," the petition said.

With such impressive credentials under her belt, she wrote the mid-career professional examination for promotion as commandant and cleared the test, with two of her superiors recommending her permanent absorption in 2021 when she completed 12 years in service. However, defence ministry officials blocked it saying there is no provision for permanent absorption for women in the Short Service Appointment (SSA) in the Coast Guard.

The petition notes that there was no discrimination between women and male SSAs till November 2009. But on November 13, 2009, the government notified the Assistant Commandant Woman (General Duty) Short Service Recruitment Rules stipulating that "women officers shall not have the option to change over to permanent entry scheme."

Despite setbacks, Tyagi made several attempts to persuade the government to grant her permanent commission considering her excellent professional track record and shortage of manpower in the Coast Guard. However, her pleas were ignored and she was informed in May 2023 that she would be released from service on December 30, 2023.

Following this, Tyagi moved the Delhi High Court in August 2023. While the high court was seized of the matter, the Centre sought to buy time claiming that a committee had been formed to study the feasibility of permanent induction of women SSAs. However, in November, the government turned down her request citing rules, which led the high court to decline her interim relief. Tyagi then approached the SC for justice.

During the hearing, Additional Solicitor General Vikramjit Banerjee representing the Centre had sought to explain that there was a difference between the stream of the petitioner who was in the Short Service Commission and the branch of Permanent Commission which she sought to be absorbed into. This technicality did not impress the bench, which asked what was so special about the Coast Guard that its women officers can't have PC while the Indian Navy allows it. "Forget about her case, we will now deal with what you do to others. We are the Supreme Court. We may not give her liberty but we will see that justice is done for women in ICG. Then we will open up the whole canvas. You better take instructions with what you want to do. If women can guard the borders, they can guard the coasts, it's as simple as that," the bench said.

Crux of the matter

The strong words from the court need to be seen in the context of its earlier order directing the government to grant PC for female officers of the armed forces on par with their male counterparts. While considering the case, the SC not only knocked down vapid arguments meant to keep women from being promoted to higher ranks but also addressed the larger issue of institutional gender discrimination arising from a deep-rooted patriarchal mindset. The court noted the reluctance of authorities to implement gender-neutral policies by hiding behind conventions and long-held beliefs that women are not suitable for certain roles, despite ample proof to the contrary.

Historically, the armed forces were slow to recruit women in its ranks and those inducted faced discrimination in terms of promotion to higher ranks and job security. The Acts that govern the Army, Navy, and Air Force had explicit provisions to keep women out of certain roles. The Central government has the power to override those but conscious efforts were taken only in the early 1990s. In 1992, the then government introduced the Women Special Entry Scheme (Officers), or WSES, to hire eligible women for specific branches of the Army, such as Army Postal Service, Judge Advocate General's Department; Army Education Corps; Army Ordnance Corps; and Army Service Corps. Initially, the term was five years.

Later, the government made women eligible for enrolment in regular Army departments such as Corps of Signals, Intelligence Corps, Corps of Engineers, Corps of Electrical and Mechanical Engineering, and Regiment of Artillery. The tenure was also extended to up to 14 years. But there was no scope for PC for women officers.

Long-drawn legal fight

In February 2003, advocate Babita Puniya filed a public interest litigation before the Delhi High Court seeking PC for women SSC officers in the Army on par with their male colleagues. Following this, several women officers from both the Army and Air Force also approached the HC for relief. Their petitions were tagged with that of Babita Puniya.

The main difference between SSC and PC is that the former allows service only up to 14 years while permanent commission allows one to continue till retirement. The consequential benefits are also higher in the latter.

During the pendency of the cases, the defence ministry issued a circular in September 2008 allowing PC to women officers in the Judge Advocate General department and Army Education Corps in the Army and their corresponding branches in Air Force and Navy, with prospective effect. The circular was challenged before the Delhi HC by Major Sandhya Yadav and others on the ground that it granted PCs only prospectively and only to certain specified cadres.

The HC heard these petitions together and in a landmark ruling in March 2010 directed the government to grant PC to women officers serving in SSC. It also directed the defence ministry to extend the consequential benefits to SSC women officers of Air Force and Army, who had opted for PC but not been granted the same. The HC set a two-month deadline for the authorities to comply with the order. The Army challenged this in the SC, which refused to set aside the HC order.

In February 2019, the government issued a circular announcing PC to women officers in 10 arms of the Army. But some conditions in the order invited sharp criticism. For example, women officers were required to indicate their choice of specialisation and intention to opt for PC after completion of three years in SSC, whereas this is 10 years for male officers. This left women officers at a disadvantage because they had to take the call at an early stage with comparatively lesser experience. Also, the circular said the grant of PC would be restricted to "staff appointments", which meant less career options for female officers. Also, the grant of PC was limited to those under 14 years of service, with a number of years ahead of them before retirement.

The Supreme Court in its February 2020 order held that every SSC woman officer, regardless of her service tenure, should be considered for grant of PC. The court also struck off the "staff appointments only" reference in the government order. As for the stage at which women officers have to opt for PC, the court said it will be on the same terms as for the male SSC officers. In both the Delhi High Court and Supreme Court's orders, the judges displayed absolute clarity in judicial reasoning - that gender discrimination cannot be allowed. The Coast Guard case is ongoing but the outcome is not hard to guess. The apex court has spoken its mind.